

Ageing better *IN* real *LIFE*!

Technology enabled strategies and tools for supporting older adults living in the community

IN LIFE PROJECT & QUALITY OF LIFE

Societies in Europe are ageing, with the cohort of “the very old” growing at a faster pace than any other age segment. It is hoped for that those extra years are as much as possible healthy and active years, but when autonomy decreases it is important that care is available and provided to those who need it.

If deployed appropriately, technology can be a precious ally in tackling the challenge to guarantee care to all on an “as needs” basis. Well-designed ICT solutions can prolong independent living, help older adults stay socially connected and facilitate sustainable integrated care provision.

The IN LIFE project has developed strategies and tools in different areas of independence for older adults with mild cognitive impairment and different stages of dementia. The aim of the project was to test how existing flexible ICT based assistive solutions can help those with difficulties in organising, carrying out and completing everyday tasks (such as home activities, communication, health maintenance, travel, mobility and socialisation tasks) and how these ICT solutions can help people stay independent and enjoy a good quality of life.

On pilot sites in Greece, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands and the UK, the project deployed personalised, multi-faceted ICT solutions and services addressing support in daily activities for older citizens living in their own home or in sheltered settings, as well as to their formal and informal carers.

Among the solutions developed and tested, the IN LIFE platform is definitely core, as it provides easy and personalized access to all the supported Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) services, including a tele-monitoring platform with almost real-time monitoring of vital signs and alerts or warnings that show the users actual location, as well as a number of applications, fall detection and other security services.

Over the duration of the project, more than 1,200 users and around 1,100 carers participated in the project and helped to mature the technology and the following insights:

- There is an urgent need for efficient ICT solutions to support independent living for older people;
- ICT solutions can help reduce and delay institutionalisation;
- The role of the informal carer is key when technology is deployed in the care ecosystem.



HORIZON 2020

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How does this affect me?

Ageing is a normal process and cognitive decline can be a part of it.

It is important to adopt healthy lifestyles and to remain as long as possible active. This includes developing or not losing interest in technologies as they might help older persons living better.

Receiving proper care is a right and organisations of older adults or patients should claim that services are provided when people need them.

Representative organisations can further insist on technologies being developed on the basis of the actual needs of older persons and with their full involvement in the definition of requirements and functionalities.

Challenges and expected benefits

Challenges

- Deploying technology in the lives of older adults with cognitive limitations needs to be carefully prepared and accompanied by comprehensible training;
- Proposed ICT solutions need to be designed in a way that they can be easily understood and used by all;
- Effective and permanent training is probably needed to ensure the correct handling of the technology;
- All users are different and solutions need to be customised and personalised;
- The availability of the minimum necessary infrastructure must be ensured (i.e. sufficient network converge and Internet connection) before deploying any ICT based solution.

Expected benefits

- The developed technologies and applications can help older adults prolong independent living allowing them to age in place while feeling safe and supported;
- The IN LIFE platform and the different devices allow formal caregivers, once obtained authorisation from the patient, to monitor the health status of clients and to obtain information on risks and critical situations
- In community settings the tools and services can help to get to know the patients' preferences and background, and make interaction and socialisation easier, while being able to create meaningful and joyful moments
- The applications and services can help to render overall care more efficient and better targeted

"Independence is a right IN LIFE"

Valentini Papageorgiou, General Hospital "G.Papanikolaou", Thessaloniki

Contact

Project co-ordinator: Dr. Maria Fernanda Cabrera, Polytechnic University of Madrid, mf.cabrera (at) upm.es

Project manager: Dr. Maria Panou, Hellenic Institute of Transport, mpanou (at) certh.gr

Partner: Valentini Papageorgiou, General Hospital "G.Papanikolaou", Thessaloniki, valentini35 (at) gmail.com

Website: www.inlife-project.eu

Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe: Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf, hoogerwerf (at) aaate.net

Website: www.aaate.net