Chapter 14
Does IT Bring Hope for Wellbeing?

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ABSTRACT

The first part of this chapter reviews the design, implementation, and customer experience with the OLDES SW tele-care platform developed within the EU project Older people's e-services at home. The OLDES solution has been successfully tested at two different locations: in Italy with the participation of a group of 100 seniors (including 10 senior citizens suffering from heart disease), and in the Czech Republic, with the involvement of a group of 10 diabetic patients. The suggested OLDES approach proved to be an effective solution for municipalities, hospitals, and their contact centres for providing health and social services. The project partners therefore decided to develop a second generation of the system called SPES (Support to Patients through E-Service Solutions), which started in April 2011. The SPES project aims at transferring the original approach and results achieved in implementing the OLDES focusing on new target problem domains: dementia, mobility-challenged persons, respiratory problems, and social exclusion.

1. INTRODUCTION

We live in times when the age structure of whole continents has been changing significantly Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, 2010), and the percentage of the population that is aging is raising concern for governments and also for health insurance systems. Much hope is now placed in new assistive technologies that could offer reasonable help by developing reliable, low-cost technical tools with intuitive control that are ready to improve the effectiveness, interoperability and compatibility of national systems of health and social care. This has become a key task for ensuring sustainable delivery of social and economic benefits throughout the European territory in the short-to-medium term. A large number of recent projects have tried to deal with disease management for the elderly, including e.g. Confidence (Gonzalez & Vlez, 2008), Attentianet (Attentianet, n.d.), Enable (Enable, n.d.), K4Care (K4Care, n.d.), SENSACTION-AAL (Sensaction-AAL, n.d.). INTEL is even developing the dedicated Health Guide PHS6000 platform (Intel, n.d.). However, one of the major problems of IT-assisted ambient technologies remains the motivation of patients, and their daily involvement in disease management systems. This applies not only to the patient him/herself (Stroetmann, Husing, Kubitschke, & Stroetmann, 2002) but also to all the stakeholders that form the care-chain in support of older persons. This problem has been addressed by the EU project OLDES (045282): "Older People's e-services at home" (www.oldes.eu), which has been co-funded under the EU IST Programme in the period from 2007-2010. This paper reviews our experience and pilot results obtained in the course of the project.

The main goal of the OLDES project, which was carried out by a consortium of 11 partners, has been to create and test new technological solutions to improve the quality of life of older people, by developing a very low-cost, easy-to-use care platform designed to make life easier for older people in their own homes. The leading idea of the project was to offer a uniform technological solution which would provide all features required by the providers of social care systems and also by those catering for various tele-health application scenarios. The feasibility of the OLDES concept has been evaluated for patients with Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) and for patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus.

The system is based on established Internet and Tele-care communication standards, and combines social computing (user entertainment services provided through easy-to-access thematic

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