

The DREAMING European Project (ElDeRly-friEndly Alarm handling and MonitorING)

The DREAMING project is funded by the European Commission under the new Competitiveness and Innovation Programme e (CIP-PSP).

The project officially started on May 1, 2008, and foresees trials in six European countries (Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Spain and Sweden) supported by an integrated system providing vital and environmental parameters monitoring and videoconferencing services. This system is based on a platform which has been specifically designed taking into consideration the special requirements of elderly users who, during their active lives, have never been exposed to ICT (Information and Communication Technologies).

The platform comprises:

- a Fixed Unit which is installed in the elderly person's house or flat and which is connected through wireless protocols to a series of medical devices and environmental sensors. These can monitor all the vital parameters of the individual and the environment in which he/she lives. The selection of the medical devices and of the sensors depends on the pathologies the elderly person suffers from and on the main risks to which he/she is exposed when at home;
- a Mobile Unit which follows the elderly person wherever he/she goes indoor or outdoor and which allows him/her to ask for help through a panic button in addition to detecting falls. The Mobile Unit contains a cellular phone able to send alarms to the Surveillance Centre. Moreover it enables locating the elderly person if he/she is in need of help or has lost his/her way;
- an extremely easy-to-use videoconferencing system which uses a normal TV set and a purposely configured remote control. This system enables the elderly person to get visually in touch with operators at the Surveillance Centre and with a group of people (the "elder's community") that the elderly person has authorised in advance through the Surveillance Centre to interact with him/her.

The technological platform briefly described above is able to ensure to the elderly person a high level of safety indoor and outdoor while keeping the house under monitoring all the time, even when the elderly person is away, thanks to the split between Fixed and Mobile Unit.

The purpose of the Project, which, in order to give scientific validity to the results achieved, will be conducted with the same methodology as clinical trials, is measuring the impact of monitoring of elderly people and their socialisation through videoconferencing on a number of very important aspects such as:

- quality of life of the elderly people themselves and of their formal and informal caregivers;
- elders' health conditions;
- the costs elders generate to the welfare and health system;
- etc.

To assess this impact, a series of indicators were selected that will be further discussed and refined in the early stages of the project and measured during the trials for the Study Group (30 elderly per pilot site) and for the Control Group (also 30 elderly per pilot site).

The project will last 36 months, 30 of which will be devoted to trials. It is expected that in such a relatively long period of time significant differences between Study Group and Control Group will be observed.

The Consortium which will implement the Project comprises 13 among private and public organisations from 7 different countries of the European Union.

Marco d'Angelantonio
Managing Director
Health Information Management SA
Belgium