

E. MANTOVANI, D. GOMEZ LOPEZ, G. KOUMANAKOS, O. THOMPSON. ***Incorporating fundamental values in ICT for older persons: Dependent older persons giving consent to technology support.*** *Gerontechnology* 2012;11(2):183; doi:10.4017/gt.2012.11.02.308.00 **Purpose** We examine the processes of obtaining consent currently used by organisations providing technological services and/or support to older people living in situations of dependency. The purpose of the research is to provide practical suggestions for incorporating informed consent into ICT and care practices for older persons. **Method** The research consists of three parts: a theoretical introduction, the description of three concrete cases, and an analysis. The analysis draws on the theoretical framework developed by Berg, Appelbaum, Lidz, and Parker "Informed Consent: Legal Theory and Clinical Practice" according to which consent consist of both a process integrated into the relationship of care, and an event taking place at a single point in time and as a discrete act¹. Data for this research are collected from concrete cases of older persons giving consent, namely (i) dementia care through GPS technology², (ii) telecare³, and (iii) remote patient monitoring through smart meter⁴. These situations are described, and the conditions leading the older person to give (or refuse) consent are illustrated and comparatively discussed. On this basis a comparative analysis is then carried out. **Results & Discussion** The cases described follow a model of event-based consent. Event-based consent reflects the legal function of consent as a guarantee that decisions impinging on personal autonomy are taken without deception or coercion. However, there are crucial moments where it is absolutely essential to follow a process-based consent model. The cases analysed show that regardless of how friendly and accessible the design, neither the aged person nor the caregivers know the technology well enough. The technical dimension gets mixed up with the consent process when users must learn how to use the terminal device and how to take care of it. In fact, failure to do so may force the service provider to rescind the contract with the user. That is why caregivers or any other relative should be involved in the process of consenting to the use of a technology. This way of giving consent may involve a 'cooling off' period, i.e. an opportunity for the consent giver to change their mind and to have further opportunities to ask questions.

References

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