

D.F. MAHONEY, W. BURLISON, E. MAHONEY. **Context aware automated prompting for dressing: Concept feasibility.** *Gerontechnology* 2012;11(2):298; doi:10.4017/gt.2012.11.02.281.00 **Purpose** To explore the concept feasibility of an automated dressing device for persons with Alzheimer's disease (PAD) and their family caregivers. As dementia progresses, the simple acts of dressing and undressing become tortuous events. Family caregivers report that dressing is the most common and pressing daily concern in late early to mid-stage AD, mainly for adult children and those caring for a parent of the opposite gender¹. The only prior study in this field simulated audio machine-based prompting to assist PAD and reported verbal prompting offers the potential to prolong drinking and dressing tasks². We will advance beyond simulation to actual technology development that will combine emotive inputs from the PAD with an iPhone and a sensor instrumented dresser to tailor motivational coaching. First, however, the technology must be built in a manner that is acceptable to caregivers, includes their suggestions, and meets their needs. **Method** Qualitative research. Two focus groups and a series of individual interviews were conducted with 20 adult child and spousal family caregivers of PAD who have difficulty dressing. Topics included dressing issues, observation and discussion of the proposed prototype technology (Figure 1). Interviews were audio-taped and analyzed using standard content analysis procedures³. **Results & Discussion** Respondents' opinions affirmed the need for dressing assistance, approved of the prototype design, and identified ways to make it more relevant for a range of needs. Adult children felt the dressing technology would promote privacy and reduce their embarrassment while spousal caregivers favoured the support of independence and personal dignity for PAD. Findings supported concept feasibility, identified added features to consider in the upcoming development phase, and ways to promote endusers acceptance when ultimately deployed in field testing trials.

References

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Figure 1. Theoretical prototype and system components