

E. Cruz-Martín, L. del Árbol-Pérez, L-C. Fernández-González. *The teleassistance platform: an innovative technological solution to face the ageing population problem. Gerontechnology 2008; 7(2):96.* Life expectancy is growing in both developed and developing countries, changing the traditional model of population and yielding new situations and challenges that have to be faced by society. Elders constitute a large group of the population, with particular necessities that require specific actions to not only increase the quantity of lived years, but also to improve the quality of living. The focus is on two main aspects: health and social care. The former aspect will allow minimizing the impact of chronic diseases in the daily routines of the users and in the cost for the healthcare institutions, while the later will not only reinforce the existing social relationships of the elder (friends, relatives), but will also create new ones. This article will present a technological solution based on Next Generation Networks (NGN) to provide a set of innovative services as an answer to these demands. **Technological overview** The term Next Generation Network<sup>1</sup> refers to a network architecture that integrates all the existing services in a unique network, and allows for the deployment of new IP-based multimedia services (such as VoIP communications, videoconferencing, integrated messaging, IPTV, home automation). This technology can be used as a basis to deploy a tele-assistance platform to offer a backbone to deliver health services and social care services following two different models: (i) Teleassistance through a service provider: Public (e.g. hospitals, care institutions) or private (e.g. insurance companies, private foundations) services provider will tender the new services to the final users. (ii) Self-care: The teleassistance platform provides a set of tools that can be used autonomously by the elders, giving them the chance to play a more active role in their own care. **Field of application** The core of the teleassistance platform, as well as the services that it offers are the result of a comprehensive work that has been carried out through the participation of Telefónica R&D in a set of research projects in eHealth, Social Inclusion and Ambient Intelligence, at European (SHARE-it<sup>2</sup>, CAALYX<sup>3</sup>) and National Level (TeleADM<sup>4</sup>, AmiVital<sup>5</sup>). **Conclusions** A new approach is presented to deliver effective care and support to people in dependency situations (elders, disabled people, mentally impaired), which yields a sustainable, affordable and expandable mechanism to connect the caretaker/service provider and the final user. The proposed solution is based in the last generation of Internet Technologies, which will be applied to define services specifically tailored to cope with the necessities of these groups of users. The design and implementation of these new functionalities have been accomplished and tested in several different research projects in which Telefónica R&D is participating at European and National level, and during 2008 its deployment as a product will be started.

**References**

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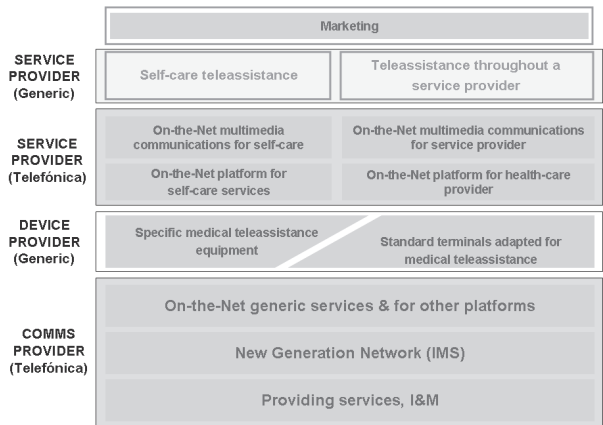


Figure 1 Layers of teleassistance platform