

M. Laila, V. Rialle, C. Secheresse, O. Magnillat, C. Brissonneau, A. Franco. *The utility and the feasibility of electronic tracking for the prevention of wandering in demented elderly patients living in an institution. Gerontechnology 2008; 7(2):147.* Wandering and getting lost are one of the main risks induced by cognitive dysfunction in elderly patients<sup>1</sup>. Innovative technologies have provided new electronic tracking devices to help families and care providers cope with this problem<sup>2-4</sup>. **Objective** The aim of the study is to evaluate the technical feasibility and the utility of an electronic tracking system for demented elderly patients residing in an institution. **Materials and methods** Electronic tracking devices have been used in the study to locate demented elderly patients living in a nursing home when they go out on their own. The device sends a phone call to the caregivers when the elderly patient wanders away from the nursing home. A map of the localised address at a given time is available on a web page conceived especially for this system. The family and caregiver satisfaction and opinion on the need and benefits of electronic tracking for these demented patients are evaluated. The demented patients' tolerance of the device and their behaviour toward its use are noted by the caregivers. The frequency of wandering and the functional performance of the system are reported and studied. **Results and discussion** The study is on-going. However, technical tests have so far suggested a good reliability of the system. The initial results of the qualitative usage study show a good acceptance of the device on the part of the demented elderly patients and an acceptable level of satisfaction for families and caregivers. Such devices already improve the safety of demented elderly patients and decrease the burden of care and stress for families and caregivers.

#### References

1. McShane R, Gedling K, Keene J, Fairburn C, Jacoby R, Hope T. *International Psychogeriatrics* 1998;10:253-262
2. Robinson L, Hutchings D, Dickinson HO, Corner L., Beyer F, Finch T, Hughes J, Vanoli A, Ballard C, Bond J. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* 2007;22:9-22
3. Miskelly F. *Age and Ageing* 2005;34:497-499
4. McShane R, Gedling K, Kenward B, Kenward R, Hope T, Jacoby R. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* 1998;13:556-563

**Keywords:** dementia, elderly, electronic tracking, family, caregiver

**Address:** Joseph Fourier University, France; E: mona.laila@imag.fr