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A.A.M. van Vliet PhD Architect
AAM-Beeld-Architectuur, Waalwijk, the Netherlands
E: aam.vanvliet@planet.nl

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GERONTECHNOLOGY FOR THE EUROPEAN SILVER PAPER

Overall the European Silver Paper¹ is very comprehensive of current problems in geriatric medicine and research; however, the technological aids mentioned under 'Clinical care – Access to specialist geriatric care' do not cover the whole concept of gerontechnology¹.

As to the section 'Clinical care', a number of needs may be fulfilled with already available gerontechnologies. These include: (i) detection of *falls* in susceptible subjects through passive or body-worn devices, for instance, 'actimeters'², (ii) monitoring of *nocturnal wandering* in cognitively impaired subjects by passive systems³, (iii) alert for *fugues* in demented patients by passive alarm systems⁴, and (iv) *general alerts* to cope with risks of living alone, such as fire alerts, unconsciousness alerts (differentiating from absence), and reminders for forgetfulness in taking medicines⁵.

As to the section 'Health promotion and preventive action', the following ongoing research is relevant to improve the quality of life in old people: (i) *walking devices* for frail old people, (ii) training old people on the use of user-friendly *networks* to prevent boredom⁶, (iii) *ergonomic* furniture and home appliances to prevent home accidents and ADL support for coping with restrictions, and (iv) a *masters programme* in gerontechnology, started in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, which will increase the awareness of the subject among health professionals and also provide personnel trained for future research and development.

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Soutrik Banerjee MD, MS, PhD
Laboratoire Interuniversitaire de Gérontologie, CHU de Grenoble, France
E: soutrik.banerjee@ujf-grenoble.fr

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