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Breakthrough in remote medical assistance

Devices/Technology

Published: Sunday, 13-May-2007

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By the year 2026, 21.6 per cent of the world's population will be older than 65, 32 per cent of which will have some kind of disability.

Official data confirm that the percentage of elderly people will increase dramatically within the next years: by 2050 there will be 180 per cent more people older than 80 than today.

Guided by these figures, the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade, through its CENIT programme, targeted at fostering cooperation between the private and the public sectors for the development of technological innovations, has granted a 20 million euro subsidy to the research and development project "AmiVital: digital personal environment for health and wellbeing".

Seventeen Spanish top Information and Communication Technology companies and research groups participate in AmiVital. From the private side, SIEMENS will be the leader of this project in which other companies take part, such as Telefónica R&D, Telvent Interactiva, Ericsson Spain, Eptron, CPI, Central de Procesos Informáticos, Acerca Comunicaciones y Sistemas and Arizone. Public stakeholders will include the association ITACA, Instituto de Aplicaciones de las TIC Avanzadas (TSB Group), CARTIF Foundation, Hospital Universitario Puerta de Hierro Biomedical Research Foundation, Rioja Salud Foundation, Carlos III Health Institute and the universities of Malaga, Polytechnic of Madrid, Saragossa and Granada, through its department of Computer Architecture headed by professor Alberto Prieto Espinosa.

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The official presentation of the project took place on May 8th, at the [University of Granada](http://www.ugr.es) where the head of the University Department of Research, professor Rafael Pay, Albert, highlighted that AmlVital is the second economic project in the history of this institution, with an investment of more than 850,000 euros.

A breakthrough in remote assistance

According to the heads of this ambitious project, unprecedented in Spain, AmlVital will not only allow for the development of specific ready-to-use products, but it will also set up a technological platform comprising device, network and computer programme standardized components allowing for a simple creation of services adapted to different needs and environments. In simpler words, this cooperation between companies and research centres will represent "a breakthrough in the field of remote assistance", thanks to the creation of intelligent devices, biosensors, portable systems (integrated into the human body or into clothes), ubiquitous wireless networks, multimodal interfaces (PCs, PDAs, telephones, etc.). A wide range of devices especially designed and adapted to the elderly and to people with disabilities or reduced mobility that will be marketed in the foreseeable future by the companies taking part in the project.

Granada was chosen as the city to launch AmlVital because of its high concentration of companies and regional public research bodies, as well as due to the support provided to the project by the Andalusian Regional Government through its department of Innovation, Science and Business. Not surprisingly, at the presentation of the project, the delegate advisor of the public telecommunications company SADETEL announced that AmlVital technological results will be piloted with Andalusian real patients, already users of remote assistance services provided by the Regional Government.

The head of the AmlVital project, also head of the SIEMENS Organization and Research department, Luis F. Reigosa Gago, and the head of the Telefónica R&D Centre in Granada, Luis Carlos Fernandez Gonzalez, stated that even though the project will be developed throughout the next four years, "the first results and their direct application to patients will take place in the short run".

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