

Mobile Elderly Living Community (MELCO): Social Community Model

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Introduction

Elderly prefer to be in their own homes and communities rather than being in hospital or residential homes (U.S. Department of State, 2007).

World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) as determinants of active ageing includes health (physical activity), b) physical environments (safe housing) and c) social environment (social integration, life-long learning).

The difficulty of older adults or persons with disabilities to perform daily living personal interests and social activities limits their experience of autonomy and well-being. Combining technological aids and mobile technologies facilitates independent living for all in the home and within the community (Mohktari and Ali, 2007). It is recommended that Technological Independent Living Services (ILS) be developed in such a way, that flexible support adjusted to different elderly needs can be offered in order for elderly to maintain social integration (Lees and De Rouck, 2005).

Aim

The presentation aims to present the Mobile Elderly Living Community (MELCO) system, which is based on Information Communication Technology (ICT) that helps elderly social integration within the community.

Methodology

For the purpose of the current project, elderly people are defined as the individuals 65+ that visit Polydynamo Senior Citizens Center of Agios Dometios in Nicosia and receive services or participate in programs offered by the Center. The needs, for the purpose of this project, were based on literature review and discussions between the staff of the Center and its elderly clients aged 65 and over. The issues that were addressed were not limited to the activities of daily living, but included levels of social care, participation in the community and physical conditions (like motion).

The development of MELCO Social Community Model, an elderly centric network that enables the effective management and collaboration of social virtual care teams was based on three axes: a) Ontology, b) Ecological theory and c) Social network and information systems analyses.

Conclusion

MELCO system seems to improve quality of life of elderly people, by stimulating and prolonging independent and active living in an outdoor environment, while promoting at the same time seamless integration and interaction of different people from all ages at any time and any place providing daily activity monitoring. Further,

MELCO shifts the focus to home-based care and community care. Consequently, MELCO may influence the physical and psychological health of the elderly.