



Press release

ehcoBUTLER project: ICT solution for independent living with cognitive impairment

Cagliari, 24 June 2015. Yesterday afternoon, at the “Ghetto degli Ebrei”, in Cagliari, ehcoBUTLER project has been presented: an innovative ICT platform and an app for health and leisure, created with the aim of improving people lifestyle and social care of older people affected by cognitive disorders.

Several professionals attended the press conference: the Social Policy and Health Assessor of the City of Cagliari, Luigi Minerba; some representatives of the Regional Health Service, including the Health Manager of the Local Health Authority n. 6 Sanluri, Dr. Maria Maddalena Giua; the Social Health District Director of Sanluri, Dr. Anna Clara Melis and from the Teaching Hospital of Cagliari. Furthermore, at the press conference took part some representatives of AIMA Sassari (Italian Association of Alzheimer disease) as well as from companies operating in the telemedicine field.

The context. Statistics describe an European context where the population is gradually aging, with more than 190 million people over 50 (37% of the total). In the same vein, in Sardinia, in 2012, the majority of the population was between 35 and 50 years. But the projections to 2022 reveal that the number of elderly is expected to grow with a concentration of citizens on the band 50-60 years.

In 2012, the elderly suffering from various forms of dementia were 15,000, and are expected to double in 15 years.

The project. ehcoBUTLER is a three-year project with a budget of 3.6 million euros, co-funded by the European Commission with €2.9 million, which aims to achieve an improvement in health and social care of elderly through an user friendly interface, allowing seniors, their families and health professionals to interpret and enhance the psychological state and lifestyle of the elderly.

ehcoBUTLER has been created by the resources developed in BUTLER, a project carried out with the collaboration of 1,500 Spanish elderly suffering from mild cognitive impairment, demonstrating the good usability of the system.

ehcoBUTLER platform will now be tested for 20 months in 5 EU28 Member States (Netherlands, Spain, Greece, France, Italy), one candidate state (Serbia) and one Associated Country (Israel), with more than 1,000 patients involved (they must be over 65, independent, with basic computer skills and with mild or moderate cognitive impairment). Another goal will be to implement a follow-up experiment with the same platform in Sardinia.

Expected impacts: an increase of quality of life of the older people; a reduction of the European Union healthcare system costs and an improvement of their efficiency; a self-sustainable health and social care easily exploitable within the European health care systems.

The project has aroused curiosity and interest among participants; in particular, the Assessor Minerba, talking about a project pioneered by the City of Cagliari addressed to 40 elderly





people for the use of multimedial tools, said: "This type of solutions are absolutely valid and very interesting, it would be helpful to understand if these systems lead to similar results and which one is better between the two methods". Moreover, favorable comments were received from the LHA authorities, who hoped for a follow-up in the Sardinia context.

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