

## Press Release

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### DIGITAL HELP FOR CAREGIVERS AND NURSES

AIT develops interactive app to support carers of people with dementia

Researchers at the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology developed an interactive app for carers of people with dementia to support them and those affected in their everyday lives. The aim of the research project is to provide professional knowledge, training and rapid assistance in challenging situations via smartphone.

The communication skills and changed behaviour of the person affected by dementia can quickly overwhelm family carers. A better understanding of the disease as well as strategies for communication and the organisation of everyday life can help to reduce the negative consequences of care responsibilities. At the same time, it is also important not to lose sight of one's own needs. With the solution developed in the SUCCESS project, caring relatives of people with dementia receive a simple smartphone app that supports them in coping with everyday challenges. "The results of a 6-month field study with more than 60 participants showed that both family caregivers and professional caregivers can benefit from SUCCESS," reports project leader Markus Garschall from the AIT Center for Technology Experience. Project team member Julia Himmelsbach explains further: "A tailor-made information and training offer can help to better understand the needs of people with dementia, to react respectfully to changes in behaviour and thus contribute to a positive interaction.

For example, the app suggests phrases that can be used to better reassure people with dementia in situations that are stressful for them, such as when they have lost their sense of orientation. Test persons report that they sometimes used the suggested texts of the Success app verbatim and that this was very well accepted by those affected, which had a positive influence on their daily interaction with each other.

#### Knowledge transfer and emotional support

In order to support different learning types and usage situations, the SUCCESS app uses articles and videos as well as avatar-based role plays and training sessions. Role plays enable people to try out action strategies and learn appropriate communication strategies in a safe virtual space. In the role of a virtual trainer, the avatar supports carers in not forgetting their own well-being despite the responsibility for another person and in dealing with their own feelings in the right way. Recommendations for joint activities also provide inspiration for organising everyday life with a person with dementia.

#### SUCCESS app will soon be available to a larger group of users

The interactive app "SUCCESS" was developed under the leadership of the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology together with companies and research institutions from Austria, Cyprus, Romania, Norway and Canada. With the completion of the 6-month field study in Austria and Romania, the research project was successfully concluded in February 2020.

"Together with partner organisations from the field of social service providers, we are now working on further developing SUCCESS in order to be able to make the app available to a broader population group in the future," Markus Garschall sums up. The goal is to create an easily accessible extension to existing counselling and self-help services. Information and training offers tailored to the needs of the specific target group should thus also enable a dementia-friendly environment for those affected.

**Further information:**

SUCCESS was supported within the framework of the AAL programme by funds from the European Commission and national funding bodies.

[Project website](#)

[Center for Technology Experience](#)

[Center for Health & Bioresources](#)

[About the AIT](#)

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