Establishing the Market for Assisted Living Solutions

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Abstract. Comprehensive assisted living solutions require interdisciplinary contributions, during development as well as during operation. What can be done, so that the prerequisites for a real market for comprehensive assisted living solutions are fulfilled? The position paper list the actions that are currently started by EU and local governments in order to foster the evolvement of the market for assisted living products.

Keywords: Ambient Assisted Living, Market, Action Plans, AAL169

1 Introduction

We know about the socio-demographic changes expected to take place in the next decades. We also assume, that ambient assisted living solutions can help the affected persons (elderly persons, persons with special needs, multimorbide persons), their relatives, the public institutions (assisted living centers, home care centers, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, emergency medical services), and the public health systems to deal with these changes.

Nevertheless, the market for assisted living products is not established yet. For similar new technologies like HDTV, IPTV, DVB-H, DVB-T, or Electronic Health Card, the market evolved very slowly. Special new promising technologies like DAB did not manage to come into practice at all. Assisted living products available currently are small closed solutions like IST Vivago[1] or Sophia[2] for activity monitoring or remote patient monitoring systems like Motiva[3] from Philips.

It can be concluded, that the market is easily addressable with small closed devices without interfaces. Nevertheless, comprehensive assisted living solutions require interdisciplinary contributions, during development as well as during operation.

What can be done, so that the prerequisites for a real market for comprehensive assisted living solutions are fulfilled?

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[1] http://www.istsec.fi/

[2] http://www.sophia-nrw.de/

[3] http://www.medical.philips.com/main/products/telemonitoring/products/motiva/

The following questions have to be addressed:

1. Which market can be addressed first for comprehensive assisted living solutions? In which of these markets will the demand be so high that comprehensive products will be developed in the next years? Example markets with target groups are institutional organizations (like nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, home care centers), hospitals & surgeons offices, and private homes.
2. How can the development of comprehensive assisted living solutions be promoted, that provide benefits for all stakeholders (end users, service providers, public/private health insurances, public authorities like hospitals, emergency medical services, social services etc.)?

The following supporting actions are currently running to foster the evolvement of the market for assisted living products:

– R&D programs on EC level: Many research institutions, medical organizations, end user associations, and industry have taken part in research programs of the EC addressing e-Accessibility[4], and e-Inclusion[5], or Ambient Assisted Living (e.g. FP6 Call 6[6], FP7[7]).
– The eHealth action[8] plan from EU states, that today's eHealth solutions in Europe are extremely select, designed in particular circumstances very often for limited numbers of patients or health professionals, in idiosyncratic circumstances. They are fragmented. To turn the situation round, a more effective coordination of implementation efforts of eHealth systems and services could benefit patients, industry and health systems across the whole of the European Union.
– The AAL169 initiative[9] at EC level, trying to go in front with support of EC and state governments, but still addressing mainly R&D topics.
– The coordination action AALIANCE funded by the EC in FP7, starting in 2008 and trying to provide a framework for stakeholders, define R&D priorities, timeframes and action plans on strategically important issues for Ambient Assisted Living.
– The EU action plan "Ageing well in the information society"[10], aiming at 1) overcoming technical and regulatory barriers to market development, through market assessments and by facilitating the exchange of best practice between Member States; 2) raising awareness, and building consensus via stakeholder cooperation in 2007 and the establishment of a best practice internet portal, 3) accelerating take-up through, for example, a set of pilot projects and a European award scheme for smart homes and independent living applications; 4) boosting

[4] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/policy/accessibility/index_en.htm

[5] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/index_en.htm

[6] http://cordis.europa.eu/ist/so/aal/home.html

[7] http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/programme/challenge7_en.html

[8] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/health/policy_action_plan/index_en.htm

[9] http://www.aal-europe.eu/

[10] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/policy/ageing/launch/index_en.htm

research and innovation by immediately supporting a joint public-private research program dedicated to "ambient assisted living".

- The national AAL programs of some EC members like BMBF and Austria, consolidated in the AAL Association[11], mainly aligned to the AAL196 initiative.
- Local initiatives like the innovation cluster "Personal Health" [12] or the Ambient Assisted Living Alliance[13] from the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft.

Objectives of these supporting actions are according to the German ministry for Education and Research[14] to:

1. improve the transfer of research results to the business area of medical technology and assisted living,
2. enable the validation and evaluation of innovative products according to the needs and acceptance of the target group without high risks in controlled environments,
3. justify changes in cost covering by the responsible stakeholders with positive evaluations and demands at the market and
4. finally establish the new market for assisted living solutions by these means very early.

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[11]   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52007PC0329:EN:NOT and http://www.aal-europe.eu/

[12] http://www.fraunhofer.de/institute/innovationscluster/personal-health.jsp

[13] http://www.fraunhofer.de/institute/allianzen/ambientassistedliving.jsp

[14] Studie zur Situation der Medizintechnik in Deutschland im internationalen Vergleich, Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF), 2005