

ICIC Conference - Tunstall presents compelling evidence

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The 22nd edition of the International Conference on Integrated Care (ICIC) took place in Odense, Denmark, on May 23rd-25th. Decision makers, managers, professionals, academics, caregivers, and patients from around the world attended to share ideas and explore "best practice". Wendy Hugoosgift Contreras, Global Director Monitoring Services at Tunstall Healthcare Group, was invited to speak about the proven benefits of using technology as part of health and care delivery.

The ICIC conference brings together like-minded people and organisations from around the globe to inspire and learn from each other. All countries face a common challenge: creating a sustainable and integrated health and care system. However, there are also opportunities when knowledge is shared, and new ideas emerge through collaboration. I was therefore delighted to be asked to share Tunstall's experience of the use of person-centered and proactive telecare to help supporting senior citizens, or citizens with chronic illnesses, live safely and independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

Living independently for longer

My presentation focused on the outcomes of an in depth, four-year study of Tunstall's telecare service in Spain which were recently published in the **Journal of Healthcare Informatics Research**.

The independent study involved real world data from over 250,000 citizens using a proactive telecare service, which combines technology with risk stratification, outbound calls, follow ups, home care visits, along with advice and guidance, to provide broader and more holistic support for service users and their carers.

There were three main outcomes:

- The use of proactive telecare helps people to remain independent for longer, with users staying 16 months longer in their own home
- Ambulance call outs were reduced by around a third
- Entry to nursing/residential care was delayed

Quality of life for citizens is also an important factor. The study shows e.g.:

- 98% of the families experience increased peace of mind
- 96,1% of the elderly feel more secure in everyday life
- 92,3% of the elderly experience less loneliness
- 78% of the elderly feel more independence

Improving quality of life and cost avoidance

Not only do these outcomes make a significant difference to the people using the service, and their families/carers, they can also lead to a reduction in public spending. Additionally, it reduces pressure on our health and care systems, which are not only facing increasing demand, but also major challenges in attracting and retaining staff. According to the Danish Union for Health Care Staff (FOA), the care sector will lack 40,000 employees by 2030. In England and

Wales, The Kings' Fund reports NHS hospitals, mental health services and community providers are reporting a shortage of 94,000 staff. ¹ New approaches using technology are essential if we are to create sustainable and integrated care services around the world.

Solutions for today and tomorrow

The focal point of the telecare service is a proactive response centre, which combines intelligent data insight with technology and care services built around the needs of the individual. Over time, this approach will increasingly allow us to detect changes in behaviour which may indicate disease development or increased risk of events such as falls. This predictive care model, called Tunstall Cognitive Care[®], is the next stage of our journey, and will enable us to predict, and in some cases prevent, deterioration in health, enabling early intervention. We can also offer remote patient monitoring, empowering people with long term conditions to become more actively involved in managing their own illness. And provide insight on population trends for better population health management to our various regional and national stakeholders.

A bright future

The ICIC brings together a global community of healthcare transformers who share a desire to create better systems for our future world, and it was exciting to both learn from others and share our experience with them. The next step will be to scale up these proven outcomes, working together to co-create health and care solutions that have people at their heart, and enable us to provide the right care at the right time in the right way.

¹<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/positions/nhs-workforce>