Reviewer's report

Title: Connecting the person with dementia and family: A feasibility study of a telepresence robot

Version: 2 Date: 28 November 2013

Reviewer: Marguerite Bramble

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Connecting the person with dementia and family: A feasibility study of a telepresence robot

Comments for Review

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper.

This is a coherent and sound addition to scientific work focused on the feasibility of assistive technology for people with dementia and families.

The aims of this feasibility study are well defined and the mixed methods approach is clearly described to address the research questions. The video data analysis has used valid and reliable measures to develop a coding protocol as a framework for the quantitative analysis. Despite technical connectivity problems encountered during the study the findings are adequately supported by the data.

The thematic analysis used for semi-structured interviews adheres to relevant standards and all analyses are well supported by the discussion and conclusions. Given this new area of research into telepresence robots the mixed methods approach and use of the Bowen Feasibility Framework provides sound analysis of the data.

The limitations of the work are clearly stated and authors acknowledge the study as work which they are building.

The title of the paper clearly identifies the findings in the study.

I recommend the paper is published subject to the following revisions:

Minor Essential Revisions – these have been identified as follows:

Page 1, Abstract: ADD comma after “Giraff”.

Page 2, paragraph 3 - CHANGE TO: Telepresence robots do not possess autonomous behaviours and therefore they require a remote user to operate THEM.

Page 3, Paragraph 1: CHANGE TO: The operator can therefore feel they are physically present at the location of the robot no matter where the robot is located.

Page 4, Paragraph 2: CHANGE TO: A Telepresence robot designed specifically for older and disabled people includes the Giraff (Giraff Technologies AB) and
VGo (VGo Communications Inc.) VGo was originally designed for communication in business but are been is now being applied to hospital and assisted living communities.

Page 7, Paragraph 2: CHANGE TO: Each dyad consisted of a resident of an aged care facility with mild to moderate stage dementia …..

Page 11, Paragraph 2: ADD: A trend diagram was generated to depict the residents' emotional responses throughout the call (See Figure 1).

Page 21, Paragraph 1: ADD: In the future researchers may need to resolve the facility’s privacy and security concerns …

Page 21, Paragraph 2: ADD: In particular, and as indicated by family, Giraff could be used to inform family of the resident’s condition, …..

Page 24, Paragraph 2: COMPLETE WORDING IN SENTENCE Fairview, RSL Care, Brisba “Connectne for their involvement in this project.

Discretionary Revisions – identified as follows:
Page 2, paragraph 2 – CHANGE TO: When the person enters long-term care, communication opportunities with family can ALSO be further reduced ….

Page 3, Paragraph 2: ADD : A group from Canada examined the requirements for an in-home telepresence robot through focus group discussion with six older people and six healthcare professionals (Boissy et al).

Page 3, Paragraph 2: ADD: INDEPENDENTLY A team from Taiwan developed a prototype telepresence robot named “TRIC” …..

Page 5, Paragraph 2: ADD: In the ExCITE project, further research proposed by European Researchers Tiberio et al. (2011) plans to compare the implication of Giraff ….

Page 5, Paragraph 2: ADD TIBERIO REFERENCE AT END OF SENTENCE: Participant perceptions of social engagement, perceived utility and privacy will be assessed in an interview at the end of the project.

Page 5, Paragraph 2: ADD: While Tiberio and colleague’s (2011) research will provide an important insight into the use of telepresence robots for older people, it is argued that the study lacks practical applicability as communication will be with a researcher situated ….

Page 6, Paragraph 1: CHANGE TO: This current study project will add to information gathered in the ExCITE project as this the project was conducted outside of Europe.
Page 21, Paragraph 2: ADD However, future studies must include a cost analysis of Giraff to enable aged care facilities the opportunity to weigh up the benefits of Giraff with the human and physical costs both for the initial purchase and maintenance of the equipment.

Page 21, Paragraph 3: ADD People with dementia, in particular those with Alzheimer’s disease, usually have difficulty in decoding emotions cognitively, such as recognising …

Page 28 Table 2: What does the Note “_” indicates data not provided by participant refer to?

Page 29: Table 3: ADD page Number and Reference to 2 in notes but not in table

Page 30: Table 4: ADD page Number and what does the Note “_” indicates that there was no usable recording for the analysis refer to?

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.