



Seoul Family Helper

Connecting Senior Citizens

In collaboration with the City of Seoul, Community Chest of Seoul, SK Telecom, Seoul Association of Community Care for the Elderly and Going Now, the Seoul Family Helper program helps seniors with dementia stay connected to their caretakers and loved ones. Caregivers, called Seoul Family Helpers leverage wearable devices to provide further support and keep the elderly safe in South Korea.

Challenge

- South Korean culture requires a strong tradition of caring for the elderly. However, there are often barriers in communication between seniors and their family members or caretakers.
- There is an increasing demand for elderly social welfare programs as the Korean population ages and grows.
- Seniors who live alone are at particular risk and those with dementia-related disorders have severe problems with their out-of-home mobility which is critical for their quality of life.
- There is inadequate support and budget for low-income seniors with these problems, who are vulnerable to many accidents and abuses.

SOUTH KOREA

2021 Statistics*

Population (2021 est.)  **51.7 million**

Life Expectancy (2021 est.)  **82.8 years**

GDP Per Capita (2019 est.)  **US\$42,765**

Mobile Penetration (2019 est.)  **135%**

Solution

- In Phase I, the program technologies allowed caregivers (Helpers) to “visit” elderly participants in their homes via 3G devices. Helpers were available remotely anytime, anywhere, through video and photo applications, where they could monitor the health and welfare of participants for preventative needs or in cases of emergency.
- In Phase II, the program is working to improve the quality of life for seniors by increasing out-of-home mobility, reducing stress and lessening the burden of care through the use of wearable devices.
- Using the IF-W576S wearable device and 4G LTE connectivity, seniors at elderly daycare centers and local centers for dementia are able to lead more independent lives, while family members and caregivers are able to receive messages from seniors and if needed, track their location should they wander off.

*Sources: CIA World Factbook (<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>);

Impact



Nearly 8,000 Elderly Patients Served

Seoul Family Helper Program has been receiving positive evaluations from participants and caregivers. 150 organizations serve more than 8,000 elderly patients and around 1,000 caregivers have participated in the local program. Due to its success, it was adopted by the City of Seoul as one of its budgeted welfare services.



Connectivity Through Wearables and 4G LTE

In 2015, Phase II of the program was launched to support seniors in daycare centers and local centers for dementia by using wearable technology and 4G LTE to stay connected to their loved ones and caregivers. Currently 21 caretakers are working with 80 seniors who are wearing the devices even when they are not with them.



Increased Independence

As a result of the program, low-income and disabled senior citizens who live alone in South Korea are better able to lead healthy, independent lives through remote access for care services.



Scalability

Future plans are to scale the program, so that the elderly can keep developing a better quality of life and can live independently in the community longer.

Program Stakeholders



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