Ethical Issues in the Delivery of Telecare and Telehealth Services

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Need for New Approach?(1)

Telecare origins in social alarms / safety alarms / personal response systems – 'social' / community perspective



Need for New Approach?(2)

Telehealth origins in telemedicine – 'medical' / institutional perspective







Need for New Approach?⁽³⁾

Smart homes and automation also in the 'mix'





EU Perspective



 Demographic changes
Escalating cost of healthcare
Citizens arise!
Expert patients
Health the responsibility of the person, not the state



Key New Areas

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Lifestyle monitoring □It's all about surveillance ... but what is acceptable? Telehealth / vital signs monitors Medical (institutional) service frameworks transferred into people's homes?



The Main Ethical Issues

Intrusiveness of equipment Reflects institutional norms - dominated by risk and clinical objectives Reduces user control and choice Configurability of equipment Limited configurability Assumes acceptability of loss of privacy Normally assumes transfer of data to third party □ Fails to give control (or feedback) to user Underpinning assumptions Promoting dependence not independence Medical not social



Concluding Note



 Real potential of telecare and telehealth, but ...
Need for recognition of user empowerment agenda
Need for equipment configurations to reflect this

... giving scope for the development of ethically appropriate services



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