

GOOD HEALTH & 'APPINESS – NEW APP PROMOTES WELL-ROUNDED HEALTH

The impact of physical activity, social connectedness and mental wellbeing has long been recognized as having a big impact on overall health. Studies have shown that social isolation can directly increase mortality rates. In older people, for example, a 2014 study found that loneliness is more detrimental to health than obesity or poverty, and can increase an older person's risk of death by 14%¹. What's more, loneliness is an issue that disproportionately affects ageing people due to loss of partners and social networks, as well as the lessened ability to get out to actively socialise.

A recent rival to popular fitness trackers, tech start-up Sentimoto has partnered with Bupa to pilot a new app that looks at users' physical fitness, alongside their mental and social wellbeing, and specifically focusing on the needs of retiring people. By looking at activity, sleep and socialising patterns together, it is thought that the app could be the key to keeping users healthy. The *My Kin wellbeing* app – free-to-download – is the first of its kind to be publicly available. Developed with funding from Innovate UK, the app uses data collected by a smartphone and smartwatch to track the three key areas of a person's behavioural health – physical, social and mental – highlighting any early warning signs and suggesting appropriate local activities to boost their wellbeing. For example, if a user is displaying a lack of physical activity as well as a drop in social connections, the app might recommend a group exercise class nearby to help tackle both issues with a single intervention.

After being designed in 2014 and developed since, the app was recently piloted in residential accommodation across the country - including one of Bupa's Richmond Care Villages - to assess how accurately it could monitor wellbeing among users. 16 residents aged 65 and over trialled the app for a three month period. Each participant had a smartphone and watch which passively tracked their physical activity, sleep, and social activity.

The results of the pilot proved successful, recognising that the app could gather data just as accurately as current methods, but in real time and with no additional effort from the subject. As such, the app could negate the need for scheduled check-ups, and could also alert the user of warning signs with immediate effect so that they can immediately be addressed.

Speaking of the app, Alessandro Guazzi from Sentimoto said: "The study is the first fundamental step in understanding who is at risk of poor health, and how to appropriately intervene to prevent it. Being able to track the individual elements of wellbeing provides a great insight. More than that though, we're able now to harness the user's data to suggest the best activities in their local area for them to take part in, preventatively tackling wellbeing issues early on."

Paul Edwards, Head of Research and Clinical Development at Bupa, added: "We all recognise the importance of staying physically active, but many of us forget the huge role that social and mental wellbeing play in our general health. At Bupa we know that technology has a huge role to play in the

¹ <https://news.uchicago.edu/article/2014/02/16/aaas-2014-loneliness-major-health-risk-older-adults>

future of healthcare, which is why we were keen to support this cutting edge research. Apps like My Kin provide exciting opportunities, and can ultimately help people of all ages live longer, healthier lives.”

Sentimoto came to Bupa’s attention following a successful Dragons’ Den style pitch process. Working with Innovate UK – the UK’s innovation agency, sponsored by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills – Bupa participated as a partner in the *Innovate UK IC Tomorrow Competition*, setting entrants the challenge of ‘re-inventing data capture’ for wellbeing.

Five finalists were put up against a judging panel, including Professor Graham Stokes alongside experts from Bupa’s Digital Health team, who concluded that *My Kin* was the strongest idea. Following the pitch, Sentimoto received £35,000 in funding from Innovate UK, as well as expert advice and the opportunity to pilot the scheme with Bupa. Following the successful pilot, Sentimoto has started working on pilots with Staffordshire and County Durham using the app to help address public health and social isolation issues in the regions.

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About Sentimoto

Sentimoto is developing a well-being smartphone application aimed at 50+ year olds. The company service not only helps identify social isolation, inactivity, and track mental well-being, but closes the loop by suggesting activities tailored to the person’s well-being profile. Sentimoto is uniquely placed on the market and, having proven the technology, is now working with Local Authorities across the UK and other partners to grow its user-base and the ecosystem of well-being activity providers.

For more information, visit www.sentimoto.com

Bupa UK

Bupa Care Services: Bupa will have over 150 care homes, as well as seven Richmond Villages with four new care homes and a village under construction.

Our business in the UK also comprises: Bupa UK Insurance, the leading health insurer in the UK with 2.3 million customers; Bupa Dental UK, a major dental provider in the UK operating more than 430 practices; Bupa Health Services, health clinics and wellness centres; and Bupa Cromwell Hospital a complex care hospital in London.

For more information, visit www.bupa.co.uk

The Bupa Group

Around 70% of Bupa's revenue is from health insurance, with the rest from healthcare provision. Bupa funds healthcare around the world and runs clinics, dental centres, hospitals in a number of countries. Bupa has care homes and retirement villages in the UK, Australia, Spain and New Zealand.

For more information, visit www.bupa.com