



«Innovation in social and health care services is already an open-ended driver, continuously and flexibly matching state-of-the-art methodologies and frameworks with users' needs and requirements.»

Sergio Russo, Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza (CSS) Research Hospital

Users' needs and requirements elicitation

In March 2020 co-creation sessions and workshops were planned to gathering users' needs and requirements at the pilot level. Yet, to overcome the restrictions related to the COVID-19 emergency, phone and remote interviews replaced face-to-face meetings: 73 interviews to formal caregivers, informal caregivers, and older adults were performed in the two pilot sites in Tuscany and Apulia. Consequently, the collected requirements allowed the Italian pilot partners to transform those needs into innovative use case scenarios in which digital technologies can play a role. Finally, we identified three main services to address: stimulation, socialisation, and monitoring.

The Apulia pilot site

Once the study criteria was defined, the Pharaon study protocol was presented to the CSS internal Ethical Committee, which approved the request to begin pilot pre-validation and to deploy technologies in the Apulia site.

After the initial recruitment phase, involving 5 older adults, 5 informal caregivers and 2 formal caregivers, pilot pre-validation activities will start in September 2021.

In this initial phase, we will collect feedback on the technologies from the users, allowing the Pharaon partners to fine-tune its solutions and ensure a smooth start to the main deployment activities beginning in February 2022.

Data handling and activities will respect current privacy and security principles and regulations, an impact assessment will let us monitor and evaluate the success of the pilot execution and

investigations will be made by our researchers to gain new evidence.

The CSS experience

The Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza Research Hospital is considered one of the most important Italian hospitals and serves as an essential healthcare reference point for Central and Southern Italy. Founded by Saint Pio from Pietrelcina, its mission consists in the medical care of patients as well as in scientific research and educating healthcare professionals. It is recognized by the Italian Ministry of Health as a Research Hospital (IRCCS) carrying out scientific and clinical activities in collaboration with the most important Italian and international research centres, particularly in the field of Genetics, Innovative Therapeutics and Regenerative Medicine. It has more than 500 hospital beds, 200 residential elderly care beds, 2400 employees, 60,000 yearly admissions (pre-COVID-19 statistics).

The Geriatrics Unit, in collaboration with the Research & Innovation Unit, previously hosted several clinical trials based on innovative technologies, like social assistive robots and Ambient Assisted Living devices.

CSS is also currently participating as a pilot site partner to other Horizon 2020 projects, such as Gatekeeper and BD4QoL.