

Social companion robots in eldercare – who gains and who loses?

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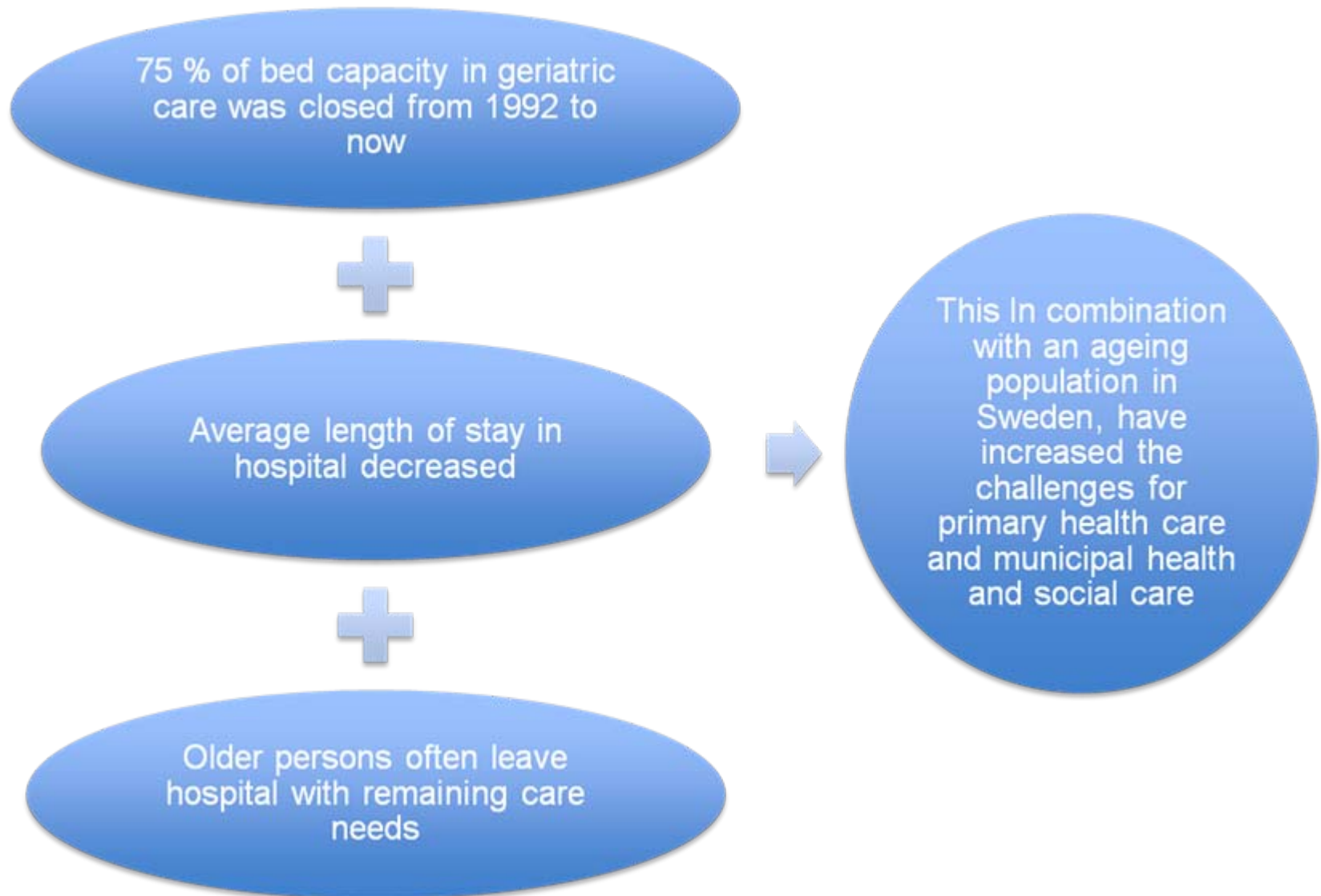




HOBBIT – The Mutual Care Robot



Development of eldercare in Sweden





The solution = social companion robots ?

Social

1. relating to or involving activities in which people spend time talking to each other or doing enjoyable things with each other
2. liking to be with and talk to people : happy to be with people
3. of or relating to people or society in general

Companion

1. a person or animal with whom one spends a lot of time or with whom one travels.
2. one of a pair of things intended to complement or match each other

Robot

1. a machine capable of carrying out a complex series of actions automatically, esp. one programmable by a computer.



Robots might mediate as a new form of companionship and care

- 1) *the human as a caretaker of the robot [1]*
- 2) *the robot as a caretaker of the human [2]*
- 3) *a hybrid between 1 and 2*

Shortcomings

- Robots can't care – manufactured artefacts
- “Surveillance” - older people wouldn't like their children to know about their everyday whereabouts [3]
- Safety and reliability [4]

[3] (Milligan, C., Mort, M., & Roberts, C. (2010). Cracks in the door? Technology and the shifting topology of care. *New Technologies and Emerging Spaces of Care*. Farnham: Ashgate, 19-37)

[4] Winfield, A. (2012). *Robotics: A Very Short Introduction*: Oxford University Press.

Is the development of social companion robots driven by the needs of older people or is it driven by the perceived needs asserted by society to lower cost of care for the elderly i.e. government policy and funding?



Ethical considerations

(1) where are we going with this specific problematic?

(2) who gains and who loses, and by which mechanism of power?

(3) is this development desirable?

(4) what if anything should we do about it?"



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