

14.09.2011

Press Release

**Project SOCIABLE: Motivating platform for elderly networking, mental reinforcement and social interaction**

**HYGEIA**, in affiliation with **SingularLogic**, presented **SOCIABLE**, a project for empowering mental abilities, at a press conference held on Wednesday 14 September 2011, on the occasion of the World Alzheimer's Day (21 September).

From now on, healthy elderly, elderly suffering from mild mental disorders and patients on the onset of Alzheimer's disease will have the opportunity to empower their mental abilities, while at the same time increasing their social skills, by adopting new Information Communication Technology (ICT), and especially technologies utilising surface computing platforms. Users will participate in personalised cognitive training exercises, using an innovative electronic table/computer with touch screen, which has already been installed at HYGEIA Hospital.

SOCIABLE is a European Commission ICT project, which is being piloted by healthcare providers in Greece, Italy, Norway and Spain. In Greece, the participants are HYGEIA hospital and SingularLogic SA, which developed the cognitive training software, assisted by doctors and psychologists from the HYGEIA Memory Clinic and the Social Policy Centre of the Municipality of Kifissia, which is participating in the clinical trial.

The **HYGEIA Group Marketing Director, Mr Antonis Vouklaris**, noted, "Focusing on providing top-level healthcare services, HYGEIA Hospital becomes an innovator yet again, as it offers a unique service to patients with dementia. Actually, with the support of HYGEIA's HomeCare Department, the elderly who cannot commute easily or live further away are given the opportunity to undergo cognitive training even at home, via tablet PCs. This way, we prove yet again that we are on the cutting edge of medical science and technology, to the benefit of the patients who entrust us with their health."

On her part, **Ms Paraskevi Sakka, HYGEIA Memory Clinic Director and President of the Athens Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association**, stressed, "Even though we do not yet have a radical treatment for Alzheimer's disease, the good news is that there is increasing proof that cognitive training helps in protecting the brain from dementia. Today, there are 7.3 million people in Europe and 160,000 people in Greece suffering from Alzheimer's and related forms of dementia. Globally, there are 35 million patients with dementia, while they are expected to exceed 100 million by 2050.

Latest research shows that consistent participation in structured cognitive training projects over a long period of time helps in preventing and treating Alzheimer's disease and related forms of dementia. SOCIABLE allows elderly people, either individually or in homogenous groups and with the presence of a healthcare professional from the HYGEIA Memory Clinic, to have fun, while at the same time training their memory, attention span, judgment and their other cognitive abilities."

The **General Manager of the Enterprise Sector of SingularLogic**, Mr Periklis Argyropoulos, highlighted, "Our primary aim at SingularLogic is to design and develop technologically-advanced solutions that provide added value to those who use them. By participating in the SOCIABLE project, we were given the opportunity to create **innovative and pioneering applications in the area of healthcare, not just in Greece, but on an international level**. By capitalising on both the scientific and technical know-how of HYGEIA Hospital's specialised personnel, and the new interactive systems, we have developed applications that offer patients with dementia the opportunity to undergo mental training through a user-friendly, pleasant and ergonomic environment, which fully meets their needs. The overall solution offered demonstrates that the development of innovative technologies opens up new horizons daily in areas such as healthcare, news, entertainment and financial services."

Finally, **Ms Eva Stamou, Municipality of Kifissia Social Worker**, described the SOCIABLE clinical trial on a sample of 35 patients and announced the results, which were quite encouraging. Statistically, there was significant improvement in the performance of elderly users in cognitive tests, after following the SOCIABLE project for three months. The improvement was most noted in the immediate and delayed recall, in speech fluency and in the geriatric depression scale.

The project will be offered free of charge until the end of the year, while as of the new year, it will be offered as a service through the HYGEIA Memory Clinic.