

TeleCareLine

“Safer Walking” Pilot Case Studies

Case study 1

Background

Mr P is an active 92 year old man who has been recently widowed. Prior to his wife’s death, Mr P regularly visited his wife in a local care home and was known by the carers working in the home. Following his wife’s death, Mr P continued to visit the home and the carers felt that he was becoming increasingly confused, forgetting that his wife had passed away.

Mr P’s daughter, Jo, moved in with him to provide support with daily activities. She was not happy for her father to go out and often tried to keep him at home, which led to arguments.

Issue

On one occasion Mr P took it upon himself to reminisce and go to a place he used to live with his wife many years ago. When he arrived in the area he found it had changed and he was found by a resident “wandering” the street muttering to himself. When the resident approached him, Mr P repeatedly said “it has all changed, I don’t recognise it”. The resident was concerned that Mr P may be lost and called the Police. The police called an ambulance, and after checking him physically, the paramedic found an issue with Mr P’s heart and took him to hospital. During this time Jo was becoming increasingly alarmed because her father had not returned home and began to search for him. Eventually she was informed he had been taken to hospital.

Solution

With his agreement, Mr P was issued with the Vega watch. The Vega watch is a purpose built system to aid safer walking for those with Alzheimer’s disease or other cognitive disorders. The Vega watch allows wearers to walk freely in a predetermined safe zone but raises an automatic alarm should the wearer walk outside of this zone. The emergency button was deactivated as it was felt that Mr P would become distressed if he was contacted. Jo contacts her husband when she becomes concerned if her father is late home. Her husband looks on the secure website and passes on Mr P’s location. Jo then makes a decision to leave him to make his own way home or goes to meet him.

Outcome

It appears Mr P has a regular route he walks in the local area. Although Mr P’s daughter admits that she would prefer her father to stay at home, she is reassured knowing where he is and that he is safe, the number of arguments they have has reduced. Mr P continues to enjoy going out daily.



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Case study 2

Background

Mr H is an 86 year old man who is diagnosed with dementia. He lives with his wife, Daphne, who provides support by prompting him to carry out personal activities of daily living. Mr and Mrs H's son and daughter have noticed that their father is becoming forgetful.

Issue

Mr H went out one day un-noticed by Daphne. When it was discovered that he had gone, Daphne became upset and called her family to help look for him. Not knowing which direction Mr H took, the police were called and a search of the area was started. Mr H was eventually found, seemingly making his way to work. Mr H used to work in central London and an underground station is close by.

Solution

Although Mr H does not recall the incident and does not recognise there is an issue with him going out, he acknowledges that his family worry if he goes out and agreed to use the Vega watch to help reassure them. The Vega watch has been set up to trigger an alarm to the monitoring centre if Mr H goes out beyond the Safe Zone. The monitoring centre contact his son and daughter giving directions to his location. His family are then able to supervise his safe return home. The emergency button has been de-activated as it was felt Mr H would become distressed if he was contacted.

Mr H's son and daughter visit weekly ensuring the battery is charged fully. As Mr H does not feel comfortable wearing the Vega watch he has consented to the family placing it in his jacket pocket.

Outcome

It appears that Mr H does not go out on a regular basis, however the Vega watch has reduced family stress by providing reassurance that Mr H can be safely located should he walk away from home. The family are confident enough in the support of the equipment to continue caring for Mr H at home.



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Case study 3

Background

Mr B is an active 77 year old man who is diagnosed with dementia and lives with his wife, Catherine, who provides support with daily activities. Mr B goes out for a walk around the neighbourhood several times a day, taking a varied route each time and depending on how far he has walked, he would sometimes take a bus back home.

Mr B usually carries a mobile phone which his wife rings to check on his whereabouts, however he has recently begun to ignore the phone ringing, or if he does answer it, he does not talk to his wife, leaving her very stressed and anxious.

Mr B has on occasions taken the wrong bus home and has been known to travel out of the borough. On one particular occasion Mr B did not return home and his wife was unable to raise him on the mobile phone. Frantic with worry, she called her family who all tried to contact him. After several hours Mr B eventually answered the phone and following his wife's instruction passed the phone to a nearby person who informed Catherine that they were travelling on a bus heading to High Wycombe. The passenger was able to direct Mr B to the correct bus to take him on a return journey. Mr B's family met him at the station. On another occasion Mr B travelled to Isleworth.

Issue

Mr B is increasingly getting on the wrong bus home, taking him out of his normal surroundings. It is becoming increasingly difficult for Catherine to maintain contact with her husband when he goes out and she is becoming increasingly stressed and anxious about his safety. This is having an impact on her social activities because she is reluctant to leave him on his own. Catherine is also restricting the number of times Mr B goes out alone.

Solution

The Vega watch was shown to Mr B and he agreed to use it to help support his wife and give her reassurance on his whereabouts. A geo-fence was set up incorporating the known routes Mr B walks. If he goes outside this safe zone an alert is triggered to the monitoring centre, who informs Catherine of his location. Catherine is then able to monitor his route and intervene if necessary.



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Outcome

Initially, Catherine was receiving a high number of alerts indicating that Mr B often walks further than she realised. The Geo-fence was expanded to cover most of the routes he takes while ensuring an alert is triggered if he enters a high risk area where he can take a number of buses to various locations away from home.

Each time Mr B goes out Catherine is able to contact the monitoring centre who is able to give his location reassuring Catherine that he is safe and whether he is making a homeward journey. Mr B has entered a bus to Gerrards Cross and the police were called to help intervene, however before they could meet him he returned home of his own accord. After this episode Catherine now leaves him to travel for a number of hours, knowing that she can monitor his journey.

Catherine is able to continue with her voluntary work, and social activities. Mr B is able to continue to maintain his independence and enjoy walking. Catherine has recently purchased a new phone which has internet connection and is now able to monitor her husband's journeys.

Catherine stated that she is "more relaxed when her husband goes out on his travels reassured that she can monitor his journey". On the occasions that he has deviated from his normal route the "experience in finding him has been easier and better".

Catherine has been able to attend functions with her grandchildren that she would previously have had to miss as she would not have left her husband on his own.

