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## Piloting of the virtual telecare technology 'Addison Care' to promote self-management in persons with chronic diseases in a community setting: protocol for a mixed methods user experience, user engagement and usability pilot study

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Complete List of Authors:	Krutter, Simon; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Schuessler, Nadine; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Kutschar, Patrick; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Šabić, Edin; New Mexico State University, Department of Psychology; Electronic Caregiver Inc Dellinger, Johanna; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Klausner, Tabea; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Nestler, Nadja; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Beasley, Morgan; Electronic Caregiver Inc Henderson, Bailey; Electronic Caregiver Inc Pitzer, Stefan; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Mitterlehner, Barbara; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Langegger, Doris; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Winkler, Anna; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Kloesch, Michael; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice EBl-Maurer, Roland; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice van der Zee-Neuen, Antje; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Osterbrink, Jürgen; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice; University of North Florida, Brooks College of Health
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3 **Piloting of the virtual telecare technology 'Addison Care' to promote self-management in persons**  
4 **with chronic diseases in a community setting: protocol for a mixed methods user experience, user**  
5 **engagement and usability pilot study**  
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11 **Authors:** Simon Krutter<sup>1</sup>, Nadine Schuessler<sup>1</sup>, Patrick Kutschar<sup>1</sup>, Edin Šabić<sup>2,3</sup>, Johanna Dellinger<sup>1</sup>,  
12  
13 Tabea Klausner<sup>1</sup>, Nadja Nestler<sup>1</sup>, Morgan Beasley<sup>3</sup>, Bailey Henderson<sup>3</sup>, Stefan Pitzer<sup>1</sup>, Barbara  
14  
15 Mitterlehner<sup>1</sup>, Doris Langegger<sup>1</sup>, Anna Winkler<sup>1</sup>, Michael Klösch<sup>1</sup>, Roland Eßl-Maurer<sup>1</sup>, Antje van der  
16  
17 Zee-Neuen<sup>1</sup>, Juergen Osterbrink<sup>1,4</sup>  
18  
19

20  
21 **Affiliations**  
22

23  
24 <sup>1</sup> Institute of Nursing Science and Practice, Paracelsus Medical University, Salzburg, Austria  
25

26 <sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States  
27

28 <sup>3</sup> Electronic Caregiver Inc., Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States  
29

30 <sup>4</sup> Brooks College of Health, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida, United States  
31

32 **Corresponding Author Information**  
33

34  
35 Simon Krutter  
36

37  
38 Institute of Nursing Science and Practice, Paracelsus Medical University, Salzburg, Austria  
39

40  
41 Strubergasse 21, 5020 Salzburg, Austria  
42

43  
44 Email: [simon.krutter@pmu.ac.at](mailto:simon.krutter@pmu.ac.at)  
45

46  
47 Phone: +43 662 2024 80341  
48

49  
50 ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5788-9574  
51

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58 **ABSTRACT** (278 words)  
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3 **Introduction:** Chronic diseases in older adults are one of the major epidemiological trends of current  
4 times and leading cause of disability, poor quality of life, high health care costs, and death. Self-  
5 management of chronic diseases is essential to improve health behaviors and health outcomes.  
6  
7 Technology-assisted interventions have shown to improve self-management of chronic diseases.  
8  
9 Virtual avatars designed for use by older persons can be a key factor for the acceptance of these  
10 technologies. Addison Care is a home-based telecare solution equipped with a virtual avatar named  
11 Addison, connecting older persons with their caregivers via an easy-to-use technology. A central  
12 advantage is that Addison care provides access to self-management support for an up-to-now highly  
13 underrepresented population - older persons with chronic disease(s) - which enables them to profit  
14 from e-health in everyday life.  
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18 **Methods and analysis:** A pragmatic, non-randomized, one-arm pilot study applying an embedded  
19 mixed-methods approach will be conducted to examine user experience, usability, and user  
20 engagement of the virtual avatar Addison. The pilot study will take place during the second and third  
21 quarter of 2022. Participants will be at least 65 years old and recruited from hospitals during the  
22 discharge process to home care. Standardized instruments and survey-based assessments, semi-  
23 structured interviews and think-aloud protocols will be used. The study seeks to enroll 20 patients that  
24 meet the criteria.  
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27  
28 **Ethics and dissemination:** The study protocol has been approved by the ethics committee of the  
29 German Society for Nursing Science (21-037). The results of the study are intended to be published as  
30 articles in high quality peer-reviewed journals and disseminated through conference papers.  
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32

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34 **Trial registration number:** The pilot study is registered in the German Clinical Trials Register (ID:  
35 DRKS00025992).  
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39 **Keywords:** Telecare, virtual avatar, older people, chronic disease, self-management, pilot study, user  
40 experience, e-health;  
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## ARTICLE SUMMARY

- This pilot study provides an opportunity to explore the acceptability of and experiences with a potentially beneficial e-health technology in the underrepresented population of chronically ill older persons.
- The mixed-methods study design will provide a deep and broad insight on usability, user experience and user engagement of Addison care as a German-speaking, culturally adapted virtual avatar.
- This investigation evaluates the efficacy of a sophisticated virtual avatar, Addison, in assisting with many crucial health management tasks – including medication management and health vitals monitoring.
- A focus on barriers to user-engagement for those who are technologically hesitant will provide rich information concerning how best to design virtual avatars and e-health technologies to match user needs and mental models.
- The primary limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size due to our selective inclusion criteria, which may diminish the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of our sample.

## BACKGROUND

Societies across the globe are facing a significant shift in age demographics whereby older adults are becoming an increasingly larger group within their population. This phenomenon is one of the most salient economic, social, and medical issues of current times.[1] Aging is the greatest risk factor associated with a majority of chronic diseases, as well as increasing the risk of multimorbidity. Between 34% and 61% of older adults have multimorbidity.[2] Multimorbidity can have consequences such as disability and functional decline, poor quality of life, social isolation, depression, and high health care costs.[3, 4]

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2  
3 Patients themselves have an integral role in the management of their chronic disease.[5] Factors that  
4 influence effective self-management of chronic disease include: experience, skill, motivation, culture,  
5 confidence, habits, physical and mental function, social support, and access to care.[6]  
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10 Self-management of chronic diseases is defined as the response to signs and symptoms when they  
11 occur, with the goal of patients playing an active role in optimising health outcomes and minimizing  
12 the impact of their conditions.[6] Self-management support refers to patient, healthcare professional,  
13 and healthcare system interventions aimed to improve self-management behaviours.[7] Self-  
14 monitoring vitals [8] and medication adherence have been recognized as two of the most essential  
15 self-management activities performed by patients to promote their health.[9]  
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25 Although interventions designed to promote self-management in chronic diseases have traditionally  
26 been offered in-person, delivering these interventions remotely utilizing available technology (e.g.  
27 mobile smart phones, Internet, interactive voice response, telephone, virtual reality) has become more  
28 prevalent.[10] These technology-assisted interventions have shown to improve self-management and  
29 health status.[11, 12]  
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37 Digital information technologies support people with care requirements to maintain their  
38 independence, improve quality of life, increase health literacy and aid caregivers in their duties.[13,  
39 14] Telehealth is one of the fastest-growing sectors in health care. The term refers to a broad array of  
40 provider-to-patient communication and has been defined as using telecommunications, information  
41 technologies, and devices to share information and to provide clinical, population health, and  
42 administrative services at a distance.[15] Remote patient monitoring is a widely used telehealth  
43 intervention that can effectively support self-management in patients with chronic diseases.[7]  
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### 53 **Remote Patient Monitoring**

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56 Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) is a promising solution for facilitating the patient-physician  
57 relationship while addressing the shortage of healthcare workers today. Through robust advances in  
58 technology, RPM has matured from simple telephone interviews to real-time tracking of biometrics.  
59  
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2  
3 RPM technology now has the capability to further simulate human interaction as well as personalize  
4  
5 the telehealth experience to make adoption more likely for those who are technologically hesitant.  
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8 Research concerning the efficacy of RPM has spanned the topics of post-operative rehospitalization,  
9  
10 chronic disease management, medication adherence, and quality of life and has shown promising  
11  
12 results [16-18]. Research has also shown that patients may find RPM and telehealth more convenient  
13  
14 for them compared to more traditional forms of care.[19]  
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17  
18 However, RPM technology can only benefit patients if they choose to actively interact with the devices.  
19  
20 In a study concerning the effect of RPM engagement on type II diabetes, Michaud et al. [20] found that  
21  
22 those who took vital measurements more often saw a greater reduction in HbA1c levels and BMI and  
23  
24 also found that those who interacted with their system more frequently saw benefits to their  
25  
26 knowledge on how to manage their disease. Impediments to RPM adoption may simply stem from the  
27  
28 'novelty' of the technology and a lack of prior RPM interaction. As compared to younger users, elderly  
29  
30 users also face unique challenges that are a direct result of aging – such as declines in dexterity,  
31  
32 hearing, and vision. As a result, researchers have identified that improving ease of navigation for task  
33  
34 completion, ensuring appropriate size and color of font, and properly configuring the size of the  
35  
36 hardware itself are paramount in addressing technological hesitancy.[21]  
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#### 41 **Virtual Avatars**

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44 RPM systems have begun to incorporate graphical user interfaces that can improve ease of use as well  
45  
46 as personify the experience for the user through virtual avatars. Virtual avatars are an emerging  
47  
48 feature in RPM that has shown propitious results in terms of user engagement, health education, and  
49  
50 self-care behavior.[22]  
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54 One important factor in the receptiveness of patients to virtual avatars is the avatar's appearance. Bott  
55  
56 [23] investigated the impact of a virtual pet avatar to deliver surveys to older clients. They found that  
57  
58 those who interacted with the avatar experienced lower rates of delirium, fewer falls, and decreased  
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60 loneliness. However, research has generally shown that anthropomorphic characteristics are often

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3 preferable for virtual healthcare avatars [24] – as well as similarities in appearance between the avatar  
4 and the user.[25] Previous literature has revealed that when designing virtual agents for older persons,  
5  
6 key factors related to acceptance of technology include conversational latency, gamification, and  
7  
8 artificially intelligent lexicon.[26]  
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### 10 11 12 **User experience and technology acceptance among older persons**

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16 Understanding how older adults perceive technology and virtual avatars may lead to improvements in  
17  
18 the accessibility, acceptability, and adoption of virtual avatars among older persons with chronic  
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20 diseases. This can be accomplished through user experience (UX) research, wherein the overall  
21  
22 experience of the user is assessed through measures related to usability, user engagement, usefulness,  
23  
24 function, credibility, and satisfaction with the technology.[27] While behavior, cognition, and affect  
25  
26 are important defining components of user engagement [28], learnability, efficiency, memorability,  
27  
28 few errors and satisfaction are defining components of usability.[29] UX is based upon User-Centered  
29  
30 Design (UCD), wherein the needs and characteristics of the end user become the focus of technology  
31  
32 design and development, with the intention of higher acceptance and fewer user errors.[30]  
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37 Theories that predict and explain health technology acceptance and use can help to tailor the  
38  
39 technology to specific patient needs. One of the more recent models, the Unified Theory of Acceptance  
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41 and Use of Technology (UTAUT) [31], posits that a person's intent to use (acceptance of technology)  
42  
43 and usage behavior (actual use) of a technology is predicated by the patient's performance and effort  
44  
45 expectancy of the technology. The UTAUT also suggests social influence and facilitating conditions as  
46  
47 determinants of behavioral intention to use the technology.[31, 32] Most older persons are  
48  
49 significantly less adept at technology use than the general population, with technology anxiety being  
50  
51 a major influence on older users' intent to use technologies.[33] However, older adults are interested  
52  
53 in integrating new technologies into their healthcare.[34] Studies confirm the applicability of the  
54  
55 UTAUT in the context of Telecare services among older persons.[35]  
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### 60 **Intervention: Addison Care Tablet Personal Computer (PC)**

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3 The present research pilots an intervention provided by Addison Care [36], which is an innovative  
4 home-bound connected virtual RPM platform for individuals living with chronic disease. A 3D-  
5 animated nurse named 'Addison' is the center of interaction between the system and its users,  
6  
7 personifying the telehealth experience for the user. The pilot study encompasses two health-related  
8  
9 functions of Addison Care: 'Addison' supporting the user in self-monitoring relevant vitals (blood  
10  
11 pressure, weight, pulse and oxygen saturation) as well as medication schedule adherence. This is  
12  
13 achieved by offering reminder and monitoring functionalities (see Fig. 1).  
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19 [Figure 1 about here]  
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22 The Addison Care hardware consists of a tablet PC with a speaker, a microphone module, and a touch  
23  
24 screen (see Figure 1). The tablet connects with Bluetooth vitals measuring devices and can be installed  
25  
26 in the user's home. Avatar technology combined with natural language understanding and automatic  
27  
28 speech recognition provides users with effective natural interaction with the assisting technology.[22,  
29  
30 26] Subtitles, vital signs, and medications are graphically illustrated on the Addison Care interface to  
31  
32 enable clear communication between user and virtual agent.  
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36 The Addison Tablet PC is connected to a web-based dashboard that allows access to user data,  
37  
38 including vitals measurements and medication reminders. For the pilot study, medication plans,  
39  
40 reminder-options, and contact information are managed by members of the study team, who also act  
41  
42 as a support team for the technical set-up and in case of technical problems. The intervention in this  
43  
44 study involves voice-driven audio-centered interaction between Addison and users in German, as well  
45  
46 as the implementation of a German touch screen interface. Introduction of Addison Care to German  
47  
48 users requires adaption of the original technology to ensure a good cultural fit. Adaptations were made  
49  
50 to the surroundings of the avatar, as well as to Addison's mannerisms. Additionally, changes were  
51  
52 made to the system to ensure a good fit between system and real life in terms of interactive elements  
53  
54 (from basics ensuring appropriate data and time formats to more complex elements like making sure  
55  
56 the avatar interacts in a culturally appropriate manner with the user). Voice and touch interaction  
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3 modes are currently adapted from English into German. All piloted features of Addison Care are shown  
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5 in Fig. 1.  
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## 8 **Objectives**

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11 While other studies have provided insight into the potential of digital health technology and virtual  
12  
13 avatars, the vast majority have been tested within laboratory settings, where older adults were unable  
14  
15 to interact with the technology in a natural setting. Additionally, the digital health systems and virtual  
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17 avatars were not culturally adapted after development.  
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21 Framed by the UTAUT, the overall study aims to explore the feasibility, acceptability, experience,  
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23 engagement, and usability of the culturally tailored health technology and the virtual avatar Addison  
24  
25 for self-management for older patients with chronic diseases in their own home.  
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## 28 **METHODS AND ANALYSIS**

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31 A pragmatic, non-randomized, one-arm pilot study applying an embedded mixed-methods approach  
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33 will be conducted to examine the primary outcomes 'user experience', 'usability', and 'user  
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35 engagement' of the virtual avatar Addison three times within the use span. 'Embedded' refers to the  
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37 integration of qualitative methods into a quantitative methodology framework, or vice versa, to  
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39 provide enriched insights or understanding into the phenomena of interest.[31, 37] The study design  
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41 is pluralistic, problem-centered, real-world applicable, and focused on the consequences of actions,  
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43 stemming from pragmatism as a research paradigm.[37] The present protocol followed the SPIRIT  
44  
45 guidelines (see Supplementary 1).[38] Data collection will take place during the second and third  
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47 quarter of 2022.  
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## 52 **Recruitment criteria and process**

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55 Eligible patients will be identified by medical specialists in German hospitals through the following  
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57 criteria:  
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- 1
- 2
- 3 - planned patients transition from hospital to extramural care
- 4
- 5 - three to nine drugs (regular intake of drugs, no status of hypermedication)
- 6
- 7 - no moderate-to-severe cognitive impairment or severe psychiatric disease
- 8
- 9
- 10 - 65 years or older with a chronic health condition
- 11
- 12 - ability to speak and understand German language
- 13
- 14

15 Provided that these criteria are met and general interest in using health technology is expressed,  
16 information about the pilot study and the intervention will be shared. If a patient expresses the will to  
17 participate, a meeting with the support team will be arranged while the patient is still at the hospital.  
18  
19 Potential participants will be informed of all aspects of the study through verbal instruction and written  
20 materials (Figure 2, Encounter 1). After written informed consent is provided, living situation and socio-  
21 demographic data will be assessed by research assistants.  
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### 29 **Setting and sample size**

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32 Addison Care will be piloted in participants' homes after their discharge from hospital for two  
33 consecutive weeks. In Encounter 2 (see Figure 2) within 1 day after the informed consent is provided,  
34 the support team will provide first instructions on Addison Care while the participant is still  
35 hospitalized. First adjustments of reminders, medication plan, and vital measurements will be  
36 provisioned for the use of Addison Tablet PC at home. This study seeks to enroll 20 patients. The  
37 sample size is an adequate number to evaluate study feasibility, test the study procedures and explore  
38 the user experience.[39, 40]  
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### 49 **Patient and public involvement**

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52 In advance of the pilot study, older adults assisted in the development of the data collection materials  
53 and pre-testing of Addison Care. However, patients and the public were not involved in the  
54 development of the research question, outcome measures and the design of the study.  
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### 60 **Outcomes, Instruments, and Variables**

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3 Building upon the theoretical concepts of technology acceptance (UTAUT), we will assess user  
4 experience, usability, and user engagement (primary outcomes), as well as participant background  
5 information (e.g. sociodemographic, care provision) and health status-associated phenomena  
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7 (functional status, quality of life and wellbeing, loneliness, depression, and medication adherence)  
8  
9 using standardized, quantitative and semi-standardized qualitative research instruments (see Figure  
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15 2).

### 16 17 **Standardized research instruments**

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19  
20 *User experience.* The German version of the User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ) [41] will be used to  
21 assess user experience. The UEQ consists of 26 items along six dimensions: attractiveness,  
22  
23 transparency, efficiency, controllability, simulation, and originality.[42]  
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28 *Usability.* To assess the usability of Addison Care, the validated German version of the System Usability  
29 Scale (SUS) will be applied.[43] The SUS [44] consists of 10 items and is a standardized, generic  
30 instrument for assessing the usability of technical applications, mobile applications, or devices.  
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35 *User engagement.* Automatic system and data logging information will be used to measure user  
36 engagement in terms of intensity and type of interactions between users and Addison Care. This non-  
37 participatory data collection, i.e. documenting data using automatically protocolled technical variables  
38 without having asked questions or the presence of an observer, will provide essential information on  
39 the actual use, used functions, and user engagement with certain contents of the product of  
40 interest.[45-47]  
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50 *Functional status.* The German translation [48] of the Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (iADL) scale  
51 [49] will be applied to assess patients' functional status in terms of activities of daily living. The iADL is  
52 a standardized instrument that measures functionality related to eight domains of daily living.[50]  
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57 *Quality of life.* Health-related quality of life will be measured by the German version of the Short-Form-  
58 8-Questionnaire (SF-8).[51]  
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3 *Loneliness.* To assess participants' perception of social isolation and loneliness, the shortened, 3-item  
4 German version [52, 53] of the UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) Loneliness Scale will be  
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6  
7 applied.  
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10 *Depression.* The German translation [54] of the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) will be used to  
11 evaluate the presence of depression.[55, 56] The 8-item version will be applied to make the survey as  
12  
13 time-efficient as possible.[57]  
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17 *Medication adherence.* Participants' adherence to their medication regimen will be measured by the  
18 Stendal Adherence with Medication Score (SAMS).[58] SAMS consists of 18 items, assessing fully  
19  
20 adherent to nonadherent medication behaviour.[59]  
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25 *Self-management.* To assess participant's Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Diseases (SESG6), the  
26 German version of the 6-item scale will be used.[60]  
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31 *Technology proficiency, readiness, and expectations.* A standardized face-to-face interview prior to the  
32 use of Addison Care ('pre-use interview') will be performed to collect information on participant  
33  
34 technology proficiency and readiness (7 items) in terms of experience with and use of general  
35  
36 information and communication technologies (3 items) as well as expectations regarding the upcoming  
37  
38 use of the Addison Care technology (6 items). These closed-ended questions were derived from  
39  
40 empirical and theoretical literature [31, 32, 61] and further adapted by the research team.  
41  
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45 *Sociodemographic and care provision variables.* Sociodemographic and care-relevant variables will be  
46 collected by means of a short, standardized 9-item questionnaire. Participants' age, gender, living  
47  
48 situation, place of residence in terms of urbanization, care provision by relatives, and care provision  
49  
50 by ambulant/mobile care service will be assessed using closed-ended questions. Information on  
51  
52 documented primary diagnoses and existing additional chronic diseases will be collected using open-  
53  
54 ended questions and categorized applying the 11th revision of the International Classification of  
55  
56 Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11).[62]  
57  
58  
59  
60

### Semi-standardized research instruments

*First experiences and encountered technical obstacles.* A qualitative, semi-structured brief telephone interview ('mid-use interview') with users after one week of Addison interaction will be conducted. Information about users' experiences to date, as well as previous effort and encountered challenges in using the Addison Care technology will be collected. The user reports are to be recorded in an open-ended documentation sheet.

*User experience, fulfilled expectations, perceived enabling conditions for use and technology's social influence, and health behaviour.* A comprehensive qualitative, semi-structured, face-to-face interview will explore participants' perspectives with reference to the fulfilled expectations after the use of Addison Care ('post-use interview'), perceived enabling conditions, and social influence in the use of the technology, as well as the participant's experiences and adaptations of health behaviour. The interview guide questions on user experience are based on the respective literature on UX research [63], those on conditions and technology's social influence along the main factors of the UTAUT model [31, 32], and those on health behaviours were developed against the background of the Health Action Process Approach (HAPA) [64]. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. With reference to the embedded mixed-methods approach, the four most striking individual ratings of the previously collected standardized User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ) will be thematised and perceived changes in secondary outcomes (functional status, quality of life, loneliness, depression, medication adherence) will be assessed using open-ended questions. To address their perspectives on the use of Addison Care, an optional topical block of guided questions will be operationalized.

*Task performance scenario and think-aloud protocol.* Finally, to gain insight into users' thoughts, decision-making processes, and how they experience the Addison Care technology, a structured observation with an accompanying think-aloud protocol will be applied.[63, 65] Participants will be asked to perform a set of specific tasks with Addison Care while verbally expressing their immediate



1  
2  
3 thoughts, and explaining their reactions during system interaction. Task performance and participant  
4  
5 comments will be documented using a structured observation sheet.  
6  
7

8 [Figure 2 about here]  
9

### 10 **User safety and data management**

11  
12  
13  
14 During the two weeks study period, medical emergencies, acute deterioration in health or care needs,  
15  
16 patients' feelings of insecurity, or hospital admissions will constitute reasons to end the participation  
17  
18 early. Formal health services in the community setting will be informed about the use of Addison Care  
19  
20 by their clients. Informal caregivers of the participants will be educated about Addison Care and are  
21  
22 instructed to contact the support team in need of help (see Figure 2).  
23  
24  
25

26  
27 Figure 2 provides detailed information on the different data retrieved during participants' enrollment.  
28  
29 Personal information of participants will be accessed by the support team only, who will monitor the  
30  
31 dashboard and assist with any user problems. Dashboard access is granted by login data provided by  
32  
33 Addison Care USA.  
34  
35

36  
37 All data retrieved empirically (see figure 2) will be saved on study-specific computers during data  
38  
39 collection and stored in password-protected folders on the support team storage after completed data  
40  
41 collection. User engagement data will be stored on Addison Tablet PC for short periods of time but will  
42  
43 be regularly exported onto the server from the clinical dashboard and after the end of the pilot study  
44  
45 transferred to study-specific computers. All personal data will be stored at a server in Berlin in  
46  
47 Germany and encrypted. According to European Union General Data Protection Regulations,  
48  
49 participants have the right to view all stored data or choose to delete their data at any given time as  
50  
51 long as their data has not been anonymized by code yet.  
52  
53

### 54 **Ethical considerations**

55  
56  
57  
58 This pilot study was approved by the ethics committee of the German Society for Nursing Science (21-  
59  
60 037) to ensure that the research is done in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and in line with

1  
2  
3 the current legislation authority. The pilot study is registered in the German Clinical Trials Register (ID:  
4  
5 DRKS00025992)  
6  
7

## 8 **Analysis**

9

10  
11 Various data will be organized and triangulated in data sets Quan 1-4 and Qual 1-3 (see Figure 2) for  
12  
13 analysis that fit the relevant phenomenon of interest. Final integration of overall results will take place  
14  
15 upon conclusion of the study [37] and will be summarized with a joint display by using a mixed methods  
16  
17 matrix.[66]  
18

19  
20  
21 Participants` characteristics will be statistically described using information on socio-demographics,  
22  
23 living and care provision, quality of life, health literacy, activities of daily living, and medication  
24  
25 adherence (Quan 1, Figure 2).  
26  
27

28  
29 A thematic content analysis of the qualitative data gained from interviews and observations in  
30  
31 encounters 3, 4, and 5 (see Figure 2) will be performed, expanding the deductively developed code by  
32  
33 inductive inputs.[67] Deductive codes prepared from theoretical pre-considerations will include the  
34  
35 concepts of user experience as well as usability. Coding strategy will separate the two phenomena  
36  
37 during the coding process. User experience results will be produced by triangulating the results of the  
38  
39 User Experience Questionnaire (Quan 3) as well as code system elements gathered in qualitative data  
40  
41 sets (Qual 1, 2, 3). These three data sets will provide usability results after interviews are transcribed  
42  
43 and coded. The codes will then be merged with the SUS results (Quan 3) to get a clear picture of  
44  
45 obstacles and acceptance. User Engagement data will track usage events like logins, reminders, and  
46  
47 overall Addison-user-interaction over the 2-week usage period - resulting in data set Quan 4 (see Figure  
48  
49 2). All quantitative data will be analyzed using common descriptive statistics.  
50  
51  
52  
53

## 54 **RESULTS**

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56  
57  
58 The pilot study will take place during the second and third quarter of 2022. Outcomes will be published  
59  
60 in peer-reviewed medical journals and presented at international conferences.

## DISCUSSION

### Overview

This protocol presents research that assesses the feasibility, acceptability, experience, engagement, and usability of Addison Care – a health technology and virtual avatar for older persons with chronic diseases in their own home.

For this purpose, we culturally adopted the Addison Care technology and its functions (tutorial, medication management, testing vital signs) to explore participants' acceptance and experiences of the health technology and the virtual avatar.

For older adults with chronic diseases, the overarching goal of self-management is to enhance their quality of life and maintain independence, all while supporting formal and informal caregivers.

The goal of this pilot study is to further our understanding of the potential issues and challenges that will be used as the foundations for a larger randomized control study.

### Limitations

Possible limitations of the pilot study are the lack of results on usability or acceptance of the US American version of Addison Care that we can refer to. Cultural adaption and translation into German therefore might not be the only reason for a suboptimal user experiences. Interviews allow to gain insight into this issue. The effectiveness of the extensive data collection process has to be proven as well as the recruitment process. The highly selective sample of the pilot study will diminish ethnical or socio-economic diversity which will be introduced thoroughly in the study following the pilot. The study's timeline may be influenced by COVID-19 pandemic recruitment-wise as well as by pandemic regulations in Germany which cannot be foreseen in the current situation. Finally, it is not the aim of the pilot study to show effects on the users' health status. But the multiple instruments for testing

1  
2  
3 health status-associated phenomena should provide adequacy to show such effects in a subsequent  
4  
5 main study.  
6  
7

### 8 9 **Contributors**

10  
11 SK, NaS, JD, PK, NN, JO, ES, SP, MB, MK, REM and BM participated in the design of the study protocol.  
12  
13 SK, NaS, PK, JD, TK, and ES drafted the protocol manuscript. MB, BH, BM, SP, AW, DL, AvZ and JO  
14  
15 critically revised and commented on its previous versions and the final version. All authors critically  
16  
17 reviewed the manuscript and agreed on submission.  
18  
19

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24  
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26  
27  
28  
29

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32  
33 This work is supported by Electronic Caregiver, Inc., Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA (no grant number)  
34  
35

### 36 37 **Declarations**

38  
39 The study protocol has been approved by the ethics committee of the German Society for Nursing  
40  
41 Science (21-037) and is registered in the German Clinical Trials Register (ID: DRKS00025992)  
42  
43

### 44 45 **Conflict of interest**

46  
47 ES, BH, and MB are employees of Electronic Caregiver, Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States  
48  
49

### 50 51 **Figure legend**

52  
53 Figure 1 Addison Care functions in German version  
54

55  
56 Figure 2 Study flow, phenomenon of interest, instruments, data sets, and settings  
57  
58  
59

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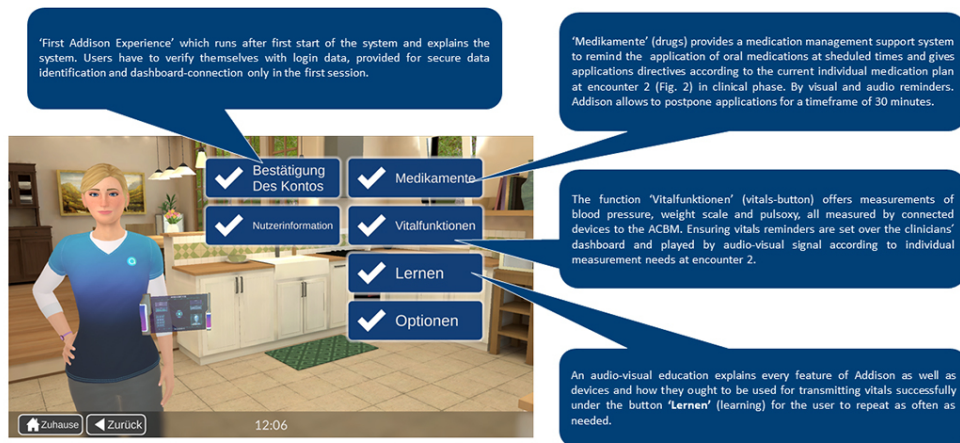
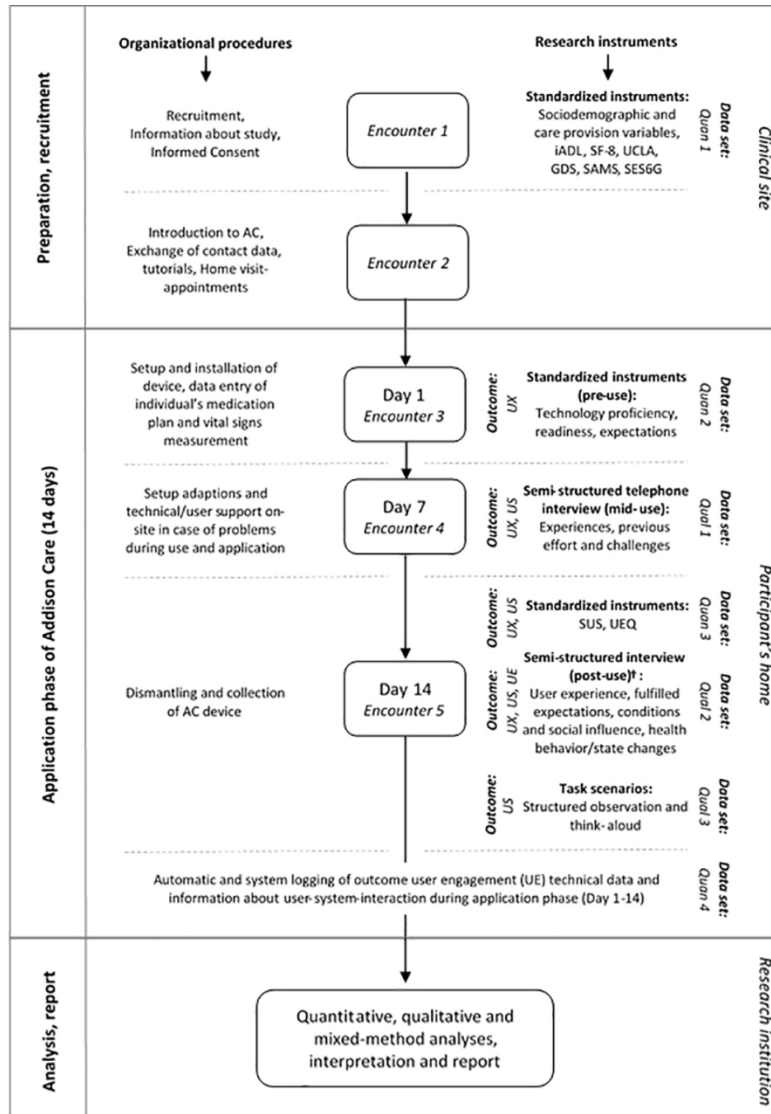


Figure 1: Addison Care functions in German version

90x50mm (300 x 300 DPI)



Notes: \* In case of the presence of relatives: semi-structured interview with relatives about their impressions and experiences towards AC; AC Addison Care, GDS Geriatric Depression Scale, iADL Instrumental Activities of Daily Living Scale, SAMS Stendal Adherence with Medication Score, SESGG Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Disease 6-item Scale, SF-8 Health Related Quality of Life Short-Form-8-Questionnaire, SUS System Usability Scale, UCLA University of California Los Angeles Loneliness Scale, UE User Engagement, UEQ User Experience Questionnaire, US Usability, UX User Experience

Figure 2: Study flow, phenomenon of interest, instruments, data sets, and settings

90x138mm (300 x 300 DPI)

## Supplement 1: SPIRIT Checklist



STANDARD PROTOCOL ITEMS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONAL TRIALS

SPIRIT 2013 Checklist: Recommended items to address in a clinical trial protocol and related documents\*

Section/item	Item No	Description	Protocol adherence: addressed on page number
<b>Administrative information</b>			
Title	1	Descriptive title identifying the study design, population, interventions, and, if applicable, trial acronym	Y:01
Trial registration	2a	Trial identifier and registry name. If not yet registered, name of intended registry	Y:02
	2b	All items from the World Health Organization Trial Registration Data Set	Y
Protocol version	3	Date and version identifier	NA
Funding	4	Sources and types of financial, material, and other support	Y:16
Roles and responsibilities	5a	Names, affiliations, and roles of protocol contributors	Y:01, 16
	5b	Name and contact information for the trial sponsor	Y:16
	5c	Role of study sponsor and funders, if any, in study design; collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of data; writing of the report; and the decision to submit the report for publication, including whether they will have ultimate authority over any of these activities	Y:16
	5d	Composition, roles, and responsibilities of the coordinating centre, steering committee, endpoint adjudication committee, data management team, and other individuals or groups overseeing the trial, if applicable (see Item 21a for data monitoring committee)	Y:09, 13

**Introduction**

1				
2	Background and rationale	6a	Description of research question and justification for undertaking the trial, including summary of relevant studies (published and unpublished) examining benefits and harms for each intervention	Y:03-06, 08
3				
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6				
7		6b	Explanation for choice of comparators	NA
8	Objectives	7	Specific objectives or hypotheses	Y:08
9				
10	Trial design	8	Description of trial design including type of trial (eg, parallel group, crossover, factorial, single group), allocation ratio, and framework (eg, superiority, equivalence, noninferiority, exploratory)	Y:08
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17	<b>Methods: Participants, interventions, and outcomes</b>			
18				
19	Study setting	9	Description of study settings (eg, community clinic, academic hospital) and list of countries where data will be collected. Reference to where list of study sites can be obtained	Y:09, Figure 2
20				
21				
22	Eligibility criteria	10	Inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants. If applicable, eligibility criteria for study centres and individuals who will perform the interventions (eg, surgeons, psychotherapists)	Y:09
23				
24				
25	Interventions	11a	Interventions for each group with sufficient detail to allow replication, including how and when they will be administered	Y:07-08, Figure 2
26				
27		11b	Criteria for discontinuing or modifying allocated interventions for a given trial participant (eg, drug dose change in response to harms, participant request, or improving/worsening disease)	Y:13
28				
29		11c	Strategies to improve adherence to intervention protocols, and any procedures for monitoring adherence (eg, drug tablet return, laboratory tests)	Y:09-11, Figure 2
30				
31		11d	Relevant concomitant care and interventions that are permitted or prohibited during the trial	NA
32	Outcomes	12	Primary, secondary, and other outcomes, including the specific measurement variable (eg, systolic blood pressure), analysis metric (eg, change from baseline, final value, time to event), method of aggregation (eg, median, proportion), and time point for each outcome. Explanation of the clinical relevance of chosen efficacy and harm outcomes is strongly recommended	Y:10
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2	Participant	13	Time schedule of enrolment, interventions (including any	Y:09, Figure
3	timeline		run-ins and washouts), assessments, and visits for	2
4			participants. A schematic diagram is highly	
5			recommended (see Figure)	
6				
7	Sample size	14	Estimated number of participants needed to achieve	Y:09
8			study objectives and how it was determined, including	
9			clinical and statistical assumptions supporting any	
10			sample size calculations	
11				
12				
13	Recruitment	15	Strategies for achieving adequate participant enrolment	Y:09
14			to reach target sample size	
15				

### Methods: Assignment of interventions (for controlled trials)

#### Allocation:

20				
21	Sequence	16a	Method of generating the allocation sequence (eg,	NA
22	generation		computer-generated random numbers), and list of any	
23			factors for stratification. To reduce predictability of a	
24			random sequence, details of any planned restriction (eg,	
25			blocking) should be provided in a separate document that	
26			is unavailable to those who enrol participants or assign	
27			interventions	
28				
29				
30	Allocation	16b	Mechanism of implementing the allocation sequence (eg,	NA
31	concealment		central telephone; sequentially numbered, opaque,	
32	mechanism		sealed envelopes), describing any steps to conceal the	
33			sequence until interventions are assigned	
34				
35				
36	Implementation	16c	Who will generate the allocation sequence, who will enrol	NA
37			participants, and who will assign participants to	
38			interventions	
39				
40	Blinding	17a	Who will be blinded after assignment to interventions (eg,	NA
41	(masking)		trial participants, care providers, outcome assessors,	
42			data analysts), and how	
43				
44				
45		17b	If blinded, circumstances under which unblinding is	NA
46			permissible, and procedure for revealing a participant's	
47			allocated intervention during the trial	
48				

### Methods: Data collection, management, and analysis

50				
51	Data collection	18a	Plans for assessment and collection of outcome,	Y:10-13
52	methods		baseline, and other trial data, including any related	
53			processes to promote data quality (eg, duplicate	
54			measurements, training of assessors) and a description	
55			of study instruments (eg, questionnaires, laboratory	
56			tests) along with their reliability and validity, if known.	
57			Reference to where data collection forms can be found, if	
58			not in the protocol	
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60				

	18b	Plans to promote participant retention and complete follow-up, including list of any outcome data to be collected for participants who discontinue or deviate from intervention protocols	Y
Data management	19	Plans for data entry, coding, security, and storage, including any related processes to promote data quality (eg, double data entry; range checks for data values). Reference to where details of data management procedures can be found, if not in the protocol	Y: 12-13
Statistical methods	20a	Statistical methods for analysing primary and secondary outcomes. Reference to where other details of the statistical analysis plan can be found, if not in the protocol	Y: 14-15
	20b	Methods for any additional analyses (eg, subgroup and adjusted analyses)	X
	20c	Definition of analysis population relating to protocol non-adherence (eg, as randomised analysis), and any statistical methods to handle missing data (eg, multiple imputation)	X
<b>Methods: Monitoring</b>			
Data monitoring	21a	Composition of data monitoring committee (DMC); summary of its role and reporting structure; statement of whether it is independent from the sponsor and competing interests; and reference to where further details about its charter can be found, if not in the protocol. Alternatively, an explanation of why a DMC is not needed	X
	21b	Description of any interim analyses and stopping guidelines, including who will have access to these interim results and make the final decision to terminate the trial	Y: 13
Harms	22	Plans for collecting, assessing, reporting, and managing solicited and spontaneously reported adverse events and other unintended effects of trial interventions or trial conduct	Y: 13
Auditing	23	Frequency and procedures for auditing trial conduct, if any, and whether the process will be independent from investigators and the sponsor	X

## Ethics and dissemination

1				
2	Research ethics approval	24	Plans for seeking research ethics committee/institutional review board (REC/IRB) approval	Y: 14
3				
4				
5	Protocol amendments	25	Plans for communicating important protocol modifications (eg, changes to eligibility criteria, outcomes, analyses) to relevant parties (eg, investigators, REC/IRBs, trial participants, trial registries, journals, regulators)	Y: 14
6				
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9				
10	Consent or assent	26a	Who will obtain informed consent or assent from potential trial participants or authorised surrogates, and how (see Item 32)	Y: 09
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15		26b	Additional consent provisions for collection and use of participant data and biological specimens in ancillary studies, if applicable	NA
16				
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18				
19	Confidentiality	27	How personal information about potential and enrolled participants will be collected, shared, and maintained in order to protect confidentiality before, during, and after the trial	Y: 13-15
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25	Declaration of interests	28	Financial and other competing interests for principal investigators for the overall trial and each study site	Y: 16
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28	Access to data	29	Statement of who will have access to the final trial dataset, and disclosure of contractual agreements that limit such access for investigators	NA
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33	Ancillary and post-trial care	30	Provisions, if any, for ancillary and post-trial care, and for compensation to those who suffer harm from trial participation	NA
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37	Dissemination policy	31a	Plans for investigators and sponsor to communicate trial results to participants, healthcare professionals, the public, and other relevant groups (eg, via publication, reporting in results databases, or other data sharing arrangements), including any publication restrictions	Y: 15
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44		31b	Authorship eligibility guidelines and any intended use of professional writers	NA
45				
46				
47				
48		31c	Plans, if any, for granting public access to the full protocol, participant-level dataset, and statistical code	X
49				
50				
51	<b>Appendices</b>			
52				
53	Informed consent materials	32	Model consent form and other related documentation given to participants and authorised surrogates	X
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2 Biological 33 Plans for collection, laboratory evaluation, and storage of NA  
3 specimens biological specimens for genetic or molecular analysis in  
4 the current trial and for future use in ancillary studies, if  
5 applicable  
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For peer review only



# BMJ Open

## Piloting of the virtual telecare technology 'Addison Care' to promote self-management in persons with chronic diseases in a community setting: protocol for a mixed methods user experience, user engagement and usability pilot study

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Complete List of Authors:	Krutter, Simon; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Schuessler, Nadine; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Kutschar, Patrick; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Šabić, Edin; New Mexico State University, Department of Psychology; Electronic Caregiver Inc Dellinger, Johanna; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Klausner, Tabea; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Nestler, Nadja; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Beasley, Morgan; Electronic Caregiver Inc Henderson, Bailey; Electronic Caregiver Inc Pitzer, Stefan; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Mitterlehner, Barbara; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Langegger, Doris; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Winkler, Anna; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Kloesch, Michael; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice EBl-Maurer, Roland; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice van der Zee-Neuen, Antje; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Osterbrink, Jürgen; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice; University of North Florida, Brooks College of Health
<b>Primary Subject Heading</b>:	Nursing
Secondary Subject Heading:	Health services research

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Keywords:	PRIMARY CARE, PREVENTIVE MEDICINE, GERIATRIC MEDICINE

SCHOLARONE™  
Manuscripts

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3 **Piloting of the virtual telecare technology ‘Addison Care’ to promote self-management in persons**  
4 **with chronic diseases in a community setting: protocol for a mixed methods user experience, user**  
5 **engagement and usability pilot study**  
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10  
11 **Authors:** Simon Krutter<sup>1</sup>, Nadine Schuessler<sup>1</sup>, Patrick Kutschar<sup>1</sup>, Edin Šabić<sup>2,3</sup>, Johanna Dellinger<sup>1</sup>,  
12  
13 Tabea Klausner<sup>1</sup>, Nadja Nestler<sup>1</sup>, Morgan Beasley<sup>3</sup>, Bailey Henderson<sup>3</sup>, Stefan Pitzer<sup>1</sup>, Barbara  
14  
15 Mitterlehner<sup>1</sup>, Doris Langegger<sup>1</sup>, Anna Winkler<sup>1</sup>, Michael Klösch<sup>1</sup>, Roland Eßl-Maurer<sup>1</sup>, Antje van der  
16  
17 Zee-Neuen<sup>1</sup>, Juergen Osterbrink<sup>1,4</sup>  
18  
19

20  
21 **Affiliations**  
22

23  
24 <sup>1</sup> Institute of Nursing Science and Practice, Paracelsus Medical University, Salzburg, Austria  
25

26 <sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States  
27

28 <sup>3</sup> Electronic Caregiver Inc., Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States  
29

30 <sup>4</sup> Brooks College of Health, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida, United States  
31  
32

33 **Corresponding Author Information**  
34

35  
36 Simon Krutter  
37

38  
39 Institute of Nursing Science and Practice, Paracelsus Medical University, Salzburg, Austria  
40

41  
42 Strubergasse 21, 5020 Salzburg, Austria  
43

44  
45 Email: [simon.krutter@pmu.ac.at](mailto:simon.krutter@pmu.ac.at)  
46

47  
48 Phone: +43 662 2024 80341  
49

50  
51 ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5788-9574  
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55 **Word Count:** 4.130  
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57  
58 **ABSTRACT** (297 words)  
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3 **Introduction:** Chronic diseases in older adults are one of the major epidemiological challenges of  
4 current times and leading cause of disability, poor quality of life, high health care costs, and death.  
5  
6 Self-management of chronic diseases is essential to improve health behaviors and health outcomes.  
7  
8 Technology-assisted interventions have shown to improve self-management of chronic diseases.  
9  
10 Virtual avatars can be a key factor for the acceptance of these technologies. Addison Care is a home-  
11 based telecare solution equipped with a virtual avatar named Addison, connecting older persons with  
12 their caregivers via an easy-to-use technology. A central advantage is that Addison care provides access  
13 to self-management support for an up-to-now highly underrepresented population - older persons  
14 with chronic disease(s), which enables them to profit from e-health in everyday life.  
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24 **Methods and analysis:** A pragmatic, non-randomized, one-arm pilot study applying an embedded  
25 mixed-methods approach will be conducted to examine user experience, usability, and user  
26 engagement of the virtual avatar Addison. The pilot study will take place during the second and third  
27 quarter of 2022. Participants will be at least 65 years old and recruited from hospitals during the  
28 discharge process to home care. Standardized instruments, namely the User Experience Questionnaire  
29 (UEQ), System Usability Scale (SUS), Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (iADL) scale, Short-Form-8-  
30 Questionnaire (SF-8), UCLA Loneliness Scale, Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS), Stendal Adherence with  
31 Medication Score (SAMS) and Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Diseases Scale (SESG6), as well as  
32 survey-based assessments, semi-structured interviews and think-aloud protocols will be used. The  
33 study seeks to enroll 20 patients that meet the criteria.  
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48 **Ethics and dissemination:** The study protocol has been approved by the ethic committee of the  
49 German Society for Nursing Science (21-037). The results are intended to be published in peer-  
50 reviewed journals and disseminated through conference papers.  
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55 **Trial registration number:** German Clinical Trials Register (ID: DRKS00025992).  
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3 **Keywords:** Telecare, virtual avatar, older people, chronic disease self-management, pilot study, user  
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5 experience, e-health;  
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#### 8 **STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

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12 - This pilot study provides an opportunity to explore the acceptability of and experiences with  
13 a potentially beneficial e-health technology in the underrepresented population of  
14 chronically ill older persons in a telecare setting.  
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17 - The mixed-methods study design will provide a deep and broad insight on usability, user  
18 experience and user engagement of Addison care as a German-speaking, culturally adapted  
19 virtual avatar.  
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21  
22 - This investigation evaluates the efficacy of a sophisticated virtual avatar, Addison, in assisting  
23 with many crucial health management tasks – including medication management and health  
24 vitals monitoring.  
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27 - A focus on barriers to user-engagement for those who are technologically hesitant will  
28 provide rich information concerning how best to design virtual avatars and e-health  
29 technologies to match user needs and mental models.  
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32 - The primary limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size due to our selective  
33 inclusion criteria, which may diminish the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of our sample.  
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#### 47 **BACKGROUND**

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49  
50 Societies across the globe are facing a significant shift in age demographics whereby older adults are  
51 becoming an increasingly larger group within their population. This phenomenon is one of the most  
52 salient economic, social, and medical issues of current times.[1] Aging increases both the risk for most  
53 chronic diseases and for multimorbidity. Between 34% and 61% of older adults are multimorbid [2],  
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3 which can have consequences such as disability and functional decline, poor quality of life, social  
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5 isolation, depression, and high health care costs.[3, 4]  
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8 Patients themselves have an integral role in the management of their chronic disease.[5] Factors that  
9  
10 influence effective self-management of chronic disease include: experience, skill, motivation, culture,  
11  
12 confidence, habits, physical and mental function, social support, and access to care.[6]  
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16 Self-management of chronic diseases is defined as the response to signs and symptoms when they  
17  
18 occur, with the goal that patients play an active role in optimising health outcomes and minimizing the  
19  
20 impact of their conditions.[6] Self-management support refers to patient, healthcare professional, and  
21  
22 healthcare system interventions aimed to improve self-management behaviours.[7] Self-monitoring  
23  
24 vitals [8] and medication adherence have been recognized as two of the most essential self-  
25  
26 management activities performed by patients to promote their health.[9]  
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29  
30 Although interventions designed to promote self-management in chronic diseases have traditionally  
31  
32 been offered in-person, delivering these interventions remotely utilizing available technology (e.g.,  
33  
34 mobile smart phones, Internet, interactive voice response, telephone, virtual reality) has become more  
35  
36 prevalent.[10] These technology-assisted interventions have shown to improve self-management and  
37  
38 health status.[11, 12]  
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42 Digital information technologies support people with care requirements to maintain their  
43  
44 independence, improve quality of life, increase health literacy and aid caregivers in their duties.[13,  
45  
46 14] Telehealth is one of the fastest-growing sectors in health care. The term refers to a broad array of  
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48 provider-to-patient communication and has been defined as using telecommunications, information  
49  
50 technologies, and devices to share information and to provide clinical, population health, and  
51  
52 administrative services at a distance.[15] Remote patient monitoring is a widely used telehealth  
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54 intervention that can effectively support self-management in patients with chronic diseases.[7]  
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### 58 **Remote Patient Monitoring**

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3 Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) is a promising solution for facilitating the patient-physician  
4 relationship while addressing the shortage of healthcare workers today.  
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8 Studies concerning the efficacy of RPM has spanned the topics of post-operative rehospitalization,  
9 chronic disease management, medication adherence, and quality of life and has shown promising  
10 results.[16-20] However, RPM technology can only benefit patients who choose to actively interact  
11 with the devices. As compared to younger users, elderly users also face unique challenges that are a  
12 direct result of aging – such as declines in dexterity, hearing, and vision. As a result, researchers have  
13 identified that improving ease of navigation for task completion, ensuring appropriate size and color  
14 of font, and properly configuring the size of the hardware itself are paramount in addressing  
15 technological hesitancy.[21]  
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### 26 27 **Virtual Avatars**

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29 Graphic user interfaces, which can improve the user experience and personalize the experience for the  
30 user through virtual avatars, have begun to be incorporated into RPM systems. Virtual avatars are an  
31 emerging feature in RPM that has shown propitious results in terms of user engagement, health  
32 education, and self-care behavior.[22]  
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40 One important factor in the receptiveness of patients to virtual avatars is the avatar's appearance. Bott  
41 [23] investigated the impact of a virtual pet avatar to deliver surveys to older clients. They found that  
42 those who interacted with the avatar experienced lower rates of delirium, fewer falls, and decreased  
43 loneliness. However, research has generally shown that anthropomorphic characteristics are often  
44 preferable for virtual healthcare avatars [24] – as well as similarities in appearance between the avatar  
45 and the user.[25] Previous literature has revealed that when designing virtual agents for older persons,  
46 key factors related to acceptance of technology include conversational latency, gamification, and  
47 artificially intelligent lexicon.[26]  
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### 58 **User experience and technology acceptance among older persons**

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3 Understanding how older adults perceive technology and virtual avatars may lead to improvements in  
4 the accessibility, acceptability, and adoption of virtual avatars among older persons with chronic  
5 diseases. This can be accomplished through user experience (UX) research, wherein the overall  
6 experience of the user is assessed through measures related to usability, user engagement, usefulness,  
7 function, credibility, and satisfaction with the technology.[27] While behavior, cognition, and affect  
8 are important defining components of user engagement [28], learnability, efficiency, memorability,  
9 few errors and satisfaction are defining components of usability.[29] UX is based upon User-Centered  
10 Design (UCD), wherein the needs and characteristics of the end user become the focus of technology  
11 design and development, with the intention of higher acceptance and fewer user errors.[30]  
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24 Theories that predict and explain health technology acceptance and use can help to tailor the  
25 technology to specific patient needs. One of the more recent models, the Unified Theory of Acceptance  
26 and Use of Technology (UTAUT) [31], posits that a person's intent to use [acceptance of technology]  
27 and usage behavior (actual use) of a technology is predicated by the patient's performance and effort  
28 expectancy of the technology. The UTAUT also suggests social influence and facilitating conditions as  
29 determinants of behavioral intention to use the technology.[31, 32] Most older persons are  
30 significantly less adept at technology use than the general population, with technology anxiety being  
31 a major influence on older users' intent to use technologies.[33] However, older adults are interested  
32 in integrating new technologies into their healthcare.[34] Studies confirm the applicability of the  
33 UTAUT in the context of Telecare services among older persons.[35]  
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#### 50 **Intervention: Addison Care Tablet Personal Computer (PC)**

51 The present research pilots an intervention provided by Addison Care [36], which is an innovative  
52 home-bound connected virtual RPM platform for individuals living with chronic disease. A 3D-  
53 animated nurse named 'Addison' is the center of interaction between the system and its users,  
54 personifying the telehealth experience for the user. The pilot study encompasses two health-related  
55 functions of Addison Care: 'Addison' supporting the user in self-monitoring relevant vitals (blood  
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3 pressure, weight, pulse and oxygen saturation) as well as medication schedule adherence. This is  
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5 achieved by offering reminder and monitoring functionalities (see Fig. 1).  
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8 [Figure 1 about here]  
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11 The Addison Care hardware consists of a tablet PC with a speaker, a microphone module, and a touch  
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13 screen (see Figure 1). The tablet connects with Bluetooth vitals measuring devices and can be installed  
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15 in a user's home. Avatar technology combined with natural language understanding and automatic  
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17 speech recognition provides users with effective natural interaction with the assisting technology.[22,  
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19 26] Subtitles, vital signs, and medications are graphically illustrated on the Addison Care interface for  
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21 clear communication between the virtual agent and the user.  
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24  
25 The Addison Tablet PC is connected to a web-based dashboard that allows access to user data,  
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27 including vitals measurements and medication reminders. For the pilot study, medication plans,  
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29 reminder-options, and contact information are managed by members of the study team, who also act  
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31 as a support team for the technical set-up and in case of technical problems. The intervention in this  
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33 study involves voice-driven audio-centered interaction between Addison and users in German, as well  
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35 as the implementation of a German touch screen interface. Introduction of Addison Care to German  
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37 users requires adaption of the original technology to ensure a good cultural fit. Adaptations were made  
38  
39 to the surroundings of the avatar, as well as to Addison's mannerisms. Additionally, changes were  
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41 made to the system to ensure a good fit between system and real life in terms of interactive elements  
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43 [from basics ensuring appropriate data and time formats to more complex elements like making sure  
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45 the avatar interacts in a culturally appropriate manner with the user). Voice and touch interaction  
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47 modes are currently adapted from English into German. All piloted features of Addison Care are shown  
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52 in Fig. 1.  
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## 54 **Objectives**

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3 While other studies have provided insight into the potential of digital health technology and virtual  
4 avatars, the vast majority have been tested within laboratory settings, where older adults were unable  
5 to interact with the technology in a natural environment. Additionally, the digital health systems and  
6 virtual avatars were not culturally adapted after development.  
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12 The study aims to explore the feasibility, acceptability, experience, engagement, and usability of the  
13 culturally tailored health technology and the virtual avatar Addison for self-management for older  
14 patients with chronic diseases in their own home.  
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## 19 20 21 **METHODS AND ANALYSIS**

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24 A pragmatic, non-randomized, one-arm pilot study applying an embedded mixed-methods approach  
25 will be conducted to examine the primary outcomes 'user experience', 'usability', and 'user  
26 engagement' of the virtual avatar Addison three times within the use span. 'Embedded' refers to the  
27 integration of qualitative methods into a quantitative methodology framework, or vice versa, to  
28 provide enriched insights or understanding into the phenomena of interest.[31, 37] The study design  
29 is pluralistic, problem-centered, real-world applicable, and focused on the consequences of actions,  
30 stemming from pragmatism as a research paradigm.[37] The present protocol followed the SPIRIT  
31 guidelines (see Supplementary 1).[38] Data collection will take place during the second and third  
32 quarter of 2022.  
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### 45 46 **Recruitment criteria and process**

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49 Eligible patients will be identified by medical specialists in in German hospitals. The inclusion criteria  
50 are as follows:  
51

- 52 - Planned patients transition from hospital to extramural care
  - 53 - Three to nine drugs (regular intake of drugs, no status of hypermedication)
  - 54 - 65 years or older with a chronic health condition
  - 55 - Ability to speak and understand German language
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3 The exclusion criteria are:  
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6 - Ten or more drugs per day  
7  
8 - Younger than 65 years old  
9  
10 - Moderate to severe cognitive impairment or severe psychiatric disorders  
11  
12

13  
14 Provided that these criteria are met and general interest in using health technology is expressed,  
15  
16 information about the pilot study and the intervention will be shared. If a patient declares the will to  
17  
18 participate, a meeting with the support team will be arranged while the patient is still at the hospital.  
19  
20 Potential participants will be informed of all aspects of the study through verbal instruction and written  
21  
22 materials (Figure 2, Encounter 1). After written informed consent is provided, living situation and socio-  
23  
24 demographic data will be assessed by research assistants.  
25  
26

### 27 28 **Setting and sample size** 29

30  
31 Addison Care will be piloted in participants' homes, located in a community setting, after their  
32  
33 discharge from hospital for two consecutive weeks. In Encounter 2 (see Figure 2) within 1 day after the  
34  
35 informed consent is provided, the support team will give first instructions on Addison Care while the  
36  
37 participant is still hospitalized. First adjustments of reminder, medication plan, and vital measurements  
38  
39 will be provisioned for the use of Addison Tablet PC at home. This study seeks to enroll 20 patients.  
40  
41 The sample size is an adequate number to evaluate study feasibility, test the study procedures and  
42  
43 explore the user experience.[39, 40]  
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### 48 **Patient and public involvement** 49

50  
51 In advance of the pilot study, older adults assisted in the development of the data collection materials  
52  
53 and pre-testing of Addison Care. However, patients and the public were not involved in the  
54  
55 development of the research question, outcome measures and the design of the study.  
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### 58 **Outcomes, Instruments, and Variables** 59 60

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2  
3 Building upon the theoretical concepts of technology acceptance (UTAUT), we will assess user  
4 experience, usability, and user engagement (primary outcomes), as well as participant background  
5 information (e.g., sociodemographic, care provision) and health status-associated phenomena  
6  
7 (functional status, quality of life and wellbeing, loneliness, depression, medication adherence, and self-  
8 management) using standardized, quantitative and semi-standardized qualitative research  
9 instruments (see Figure 2).  
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### 16 17 **Standardized research instruments**

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20 *User experience.* The German version of the User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ) [41] will be used to  
21 assess user experience. The UEQ consists of 26 items along six scales: attractiveness (6 items,  
22 Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha=0.89$ ), perspicuity (4 items,  $\alpha=0.82$ ), efficiency (4 items,  $\alpha=0.73$ ), dependability (4  
23 items,  $\alpha=0.65$ ), stimulation (4 items,  $\alpha=0.76$ ), and novelty (4 items,  $\alpha=0.83$ ).[41, 42] Each item  
24 represents a 7-point rating scale (-3 most negative rating, +3 most positive rating) of properties that  
25 the product under study may have. An average score is computed for each scale.  
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35 *Usability.* To assess the usability of Addison Care, the validated German version of the System Usability  
36 Scale (SUS) will be applied.[43] The SUS [44] consists of 10 items and is a standardized, generic  
37 instrument for assessing the usability of technical applications, mobile applications, or devices. Internal  
38 consistency has been reported to range between  $\alpha=0.70$  to 0.95.[45] The SUS consists of 10 items,  
39 each with five-point rating scales (1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree). The standardized scoring of  
40 the SUS results in a total score between 0 to 100 points using a given norm-based scoring  
41 algorithm.[45]  
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51 *User engagement.* Automatic system and data logging information will be used to measure user  
52 engagement in terms of intensity and type of interactions between users and Addison Care. This non-  
53 participatory data collection, e.g., documenting data using automatically protocolled technical  
54 variables without having asked questions or the presence of an observer, will provide essential  
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3 information on the actual use, used functions, and user engagement with certain contents of the  
4 product of interest.[46-48]  
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8 *Functional status.* The German translation [49] of the Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (iADL) scale  
9 [50] will be applied to assess patients' functional status in terms of activities of daily living. The iADL is  
10 a standardized instrument that measures functionality related to eight domains of daily living. It has  
11 reported reliability coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.91.[51] Each domain is measured using either  
12 three or four ability levels with 0 or 1 point per domain, resulting in a summary score of 8 points at  
13 maximum. Due to a strong reference of some items to household aspects, gender-specific scores will  
14 be used, e.g., 0 (low function, dependent) to 8 (high function, independent) for women and 0 to 5 for  
15 men, respectively.[51]  
16  
17

18  
19 *Quality of life.* Health-related quality of life will be measured by the German version of the Short-Form-  
20 8-Questionnaire (SF-8).[52] The SF-8 assesses the 8 dimensions physical functioning, role physical (role  
21 limitations because of physical health), bodily pain, general health, vitality, social functioning, role  
22 emotional (role limitations because of emotional problems), and mental health, by one item each, and  
23 along two scales 'physical component summary score' and 'mental component summary score'. The  
24 items comprise of five- or six-point response scales that verbalize the extent to which each dimension  
25 is present. In addition to single-item analysis, the two summary scores will be measured using a given  
26 norm-based scoring method. Next to an adequate test-retest reliability [52], an overall internal  
27 consistency between  $\alpha=0.86$  and 0.92 have been reported.[53]  
28  
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30  
31 *Loneliness.* To assess participants' perception of social isolation and loneliness, the shortened, 3-item  
32 German version [54, 55] of the UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) Loneliness Scale will be  
33 applied. Each item exhibits a five-level response scale (very often, often, sometimes, rarely, never) and  
34 will be analysed item-by-item. Cronbach's alpha for the 3-item loneliness scale was 0.72.[54]  
35  
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38 *Depression.* The German translation [56] of the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) will be used to  
39 evaluate the presence of depression.[57, 58] The 8-item version will be applied to make the survey as  
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3 time-efficient as possible.[59] Participants are asked about selected symptoms of depressive states  
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5 over the past week using a dichotomous response format (no vs. yes). The total sum score of the GDS-8  
6  
7 is 0-8 points. Internal consistency with  $\alpha > 0.80$  has been shown [59]. A recommended cut-off score of  
8  
9  $GDS \geq 3$  indicating relevant indications of depression will be applied.

11  
12  
13 *Medication adherence.* Participants' adherence to their medication regimen will be measured by the  
14  
15 Stendal Adherence with Medication Score (SAMS).[60] SAMS consists of 18 items on a five-level  
16  
17 response scale (0-4) assessing fully adherent to nonadherent medication behaviour per item.[61]  
18  
19 Responses are summarized into a cumulative point scale (0-72), which can be categorized as fully  
20  
21 adherent (0), moderately adherent (1-10), and not adherent (>10). An overall internal consistency of  
22  
23  $\alpha = 0.83$  has been reported.[61]

24  
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27 *Self-management.* To assess participant's Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Diseases (SESG6), the  
28  
29 German version of the 6-item scale will be used.[62] The six items are rated with a 10-level Likert-type  
30  
31 scale (1 'not at all confident' to 10 'totally confident'). A mean score over at least four of the six items  
32  
33 will be calculated, thus allowing a maximum of two missing item responses. SESG6 has been attested  
34  
35 a high internal consistency measure of  $\alpha = 0.93$ . [62]

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39 *Technology proficiency, readiness, and expectations.* A standardized face-to-face interview prior to the  
40  
41 use of Addison Care ('pre-use interview') will be performed to collect information on participant  
42  
43 technology proficiency and readiness (7 items) in terms of experience with and use of general  
44  
45 information and communication technologies (3 items) as well as expectations regarding the upcoming  
46  
47 use of the Addison Care technology (6 items). These closed-ended questions were derived from  
48  
49 empirical and theoretical literature [31, 32, 63] and further adapted by the research team.

50  
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53 *Sociodemographic and care provision variables.* Sociodemographic and care-relevant variables will be  
54  
55 collected by means of a short, standardized 9-item questionnaire. Age of participants, gender, living  
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57 situation, place of residence in terms of urbanization, care provision by relatives, and care provision  
58  
59 by ambulant/mobile care service will be assessed using closed-ended questions. Information on  
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3 documented primary diagnoses and existing additional chronic diseases will be collected using open-  
4 ended questions and categorized applying the 11th revision of the International Classification of  
5 Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11).[64]  
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### 10 **Semi-standardized research instruments**

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13 *First experiences and encountered technical obstacles.* A qualitative, semi-structured brief telephone  
14 interview ('mid-use interview') with users after one week of Addison interaction will be conducted.  
15 Information about users' experiences to date, as well as previous effort and encountered challenges  
16 in using the Addison Care technology will be collected. The user reports are to be recorded in an open-  
17 ended documentation sheet.  
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26 *User experience, fulfilled expectations, perceived enabling conditions for use and technology's social*  
27 *influence, and health behaviour.* A comprehensive qualitative, semi-structured, face-to-face interview  
28 will explore participants' perspectives with reference to the fulfilled expectations after the use of  
29 Addison Care ('post-use interview'), perceived enabling conditions, and social influence in the use of  
30 the technology, as well as the participant's experiences and adaptations of health behaviour. The  
31 interview guide questions on user experience are based on the respective literature on UX research  
32 [65], those on conditions and technology's social influence along the main factors of the UTAUT model  
33 [31, 32], and those on health behaviours were developed against the background of the Health Action  
34 Process Approach (HAPA).[66] The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. With reference  
35 to the embedded mixed-methods approach, the four most striking individual ratings of the previously  
36 collected standardized User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ) will be thematised and perceived changes  
37 in secondary outcomes (functional status, quality of life, loneliness, depression, medication  
38 adherence) will be assessed using open-ended questions. To address their perspectives on the use of  
39 Addison Care, an optional topical block of guided questions will be operationalized.  
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58 *Task performance scenario and think-aloud protocol.* Finally, to gain insight into user thoughts,  
59 decision-making processes, and how they experience the Addison Care technology, a structured  
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3 observation with an accompanying think-aloud protocol will be applied.[67] Participants will be asked  
4  
5 to perform a set of specific tasks with Addison Care while verbally expressing their immediate  
6  
7 thoughts, and explaining their reactions during system interaction. Task performance and participant  
8  
9 comments will be documented using a structured observation sheet.  
10  
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12  
13 [Figure 2 about here]  
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15

### 16 **User safety and data management**

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18 During the two weeks study period, medical emergencies, acute deterioration in health or care needs,  
19  
20 patients' feelings of insecurity, or hospital admissions will constitute reasons to end the participation  
21  
22 early. Formal health services in the community setting will be informed about the use of Addison Care  
23  
24 by their clients. Informal caregivers of the participants will be educated about Addison Care and are  
25  
26 instructed to contact the support team in need of help (see Figure 2).  
27  
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29

30  
31 Figure 2 provides detailed information on the different data retrieved during participants'  
32  
33 enrolment. Personal information of participants will be accessed by the support team only, who will  
34  
35 monitor the dashboard and assist with any user problems. Dashboard access is granted by login data  
36  
37 provided by Addison Care USA.  
38  
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41 All data retrieved empirically (see figure 2) will be saved on study-specific computers during data  
42  
43 collection and stored in password-protected folders on the support team storage after completed data  
44  
45 collection. User engagement data will be stored on Addison Tablet PC for short periods of time being  
46  
47 but regularly exported onto the server from the clinical dashboard and after the end of the pilot study  
48  
49 transferred to study-specific computers. All personal data will be stored at a server in Berlin in  
50  
51 Germany and encrypted. According to European Union General Data Protection Regulations,  
52  
53 participants have the right to view all stored data or choose to delete their data at any given time as  
54  
55 long as their data has not been anonymized by code yet.  
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### 59 **Ethical considerations**

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3 This pilot study was approved by the ethics committee of the German Society for Nursing Science (21-  
4 037) to ensure that the research is done in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and in line with  
5 the current legislation authority (see Supplementary 2). The pilot study is registered in the German  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10 Clinical Trials Register (ID: DRKS00025992).

### 11 12 13 **Analysis**

14  
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16 Various data will be organized and triangulated in data sets Quan 1-4 and Qual 1-3 (see Figure 2) for  
17  
18 analysis that fit the relevant phenomenon of interest. Final integration of overall results will take place  
19  
20 upon conclusion of the study [37] and will be summarized with a joint display by using a mixed methods  
21  
22 matrix.[68]

23  
24  
25 Participants` characteristics will be statistically described using information on socio-demographics,  
26  
27 living and care provision, quality of life, health literacy, activities of daily living, and medication  
28  
29 adherence (Quan 1, Figure 2).

30  
31  
32  
33 A thematic content analysis of the qualitative data gained from interviews and observations in  
34  
35 encounters 4 and 5 (see Figure 2) will be performed, expanding the deductively developed code by  
36  
37 inductive inputs.[69] Deductive codes prepared from theoretical pre-considerations will include the  
38  
39 concepts of user experience as well as usability. Coding strategy will separate the two phenomena  
40  
41 during the coding process. User experience results will be produced by triangulating the results of the  
42  
43 User Experience Questionnaire (Quan 3) as well as code system elements gathered in qualitative data  
44  
45 sets (Qual 1, 2, 3). These three data sets will provide usability results after interviews are transcribed  
46  
47 and coded. The codes will then be merged with the SUS results (Quan 3) to get a clear picture of  
48  
49 obstacles and acceptance. User Engagement data will track usage events like logins, reminders, and  
50  
51 overall Addison-user-interaction over the 2-week usage period - resulting in data set Quan 4 (see Figure  
52  
53 2). To facilitate the subsequent main study, deductive codes for the area of a feasibility study are also  
54  
55 included in the coding strategy.[70] All quantitative data will be analyzed using common descriptive  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60 statistics.

## DISCUSSION

### Overview

This protocol presents research that assesses the feasibility, acceptability, experience, engagement, and usability of Addison Care – a health technology and virtual avatar for older persons with chronic diseases in their own home.

For this purpose, we culturally adopted the Addison Care technology and its functions (tutorial, medication management, testing vital signs) to explore participants' acceptance and experiences of the health technology and the virtual avatar.

For older adults with chronic diseases, the overarching goal of self-management is to enhance their quality of life and maintain independence, all while supporting formal and informal caregivers.

The goal of this pilot study is to further our understanding of the potential issues and challenges that will be used as the foundations for a larger randomized control study.

One of the strengths of this study is the use of the health technology for a longer period of time and with real patients in a natural setting. Another strength lies in the cultural adaption of the health technology and its integration in a telecare framework. The integrated voice and touch interaction with the avatar 'Addison' should also contribute to improve the human-computer interaction.

### Limitations

Possible limitations of the pilot study are the lack of results on usability or acceptance of the US American version of Addison Care that we can refer to. Cultural adaption and translation into German therefore might not be the only reason for a suboptimal user experience. Interviews allow to gain insight into this issue. The effectiveness of the extensive data collection process has to be proven as well as the recruitment process. The highly selective sample of the pilot study will diminish ethnical or

1  
2  
3 socio-economic diversity which will be introduced thoroughly in the study following the pilot. Within  
4  
5 the qualitative branch of the mixed-methods study we seek sufficient richness of data but do not  
6  
7 expect to achieve a data saturation. The study's time line may be influenced by COVID-19 pandemic  
8  
9 recruitment-wise as well as by pandemic regulations in Germany which cannot be foreseen at the  
10  
11 current situation. Because we do not have an influence on the stability of the Internet connection, this  
12  
13 could be another source of uncertainty. Finally, it is not the aim of the pilot study to show effects on  
14  
15 the health status of the users. But the multiple instruments for testing health status-associated  
16  
17 phenomena should provide adequacy to show such effects in a subsequent main study.  
18  
19

### 20 21 22 **Contributors**

23  
24  
25 SK, NaS, JD, PK, NN, JO, ES, SP, MB, MK, REM and BM participated in the design of the study protocol.  
26  
27 SK, NaS, PK, JD, TK, and ES drafted the protocol manuscript. MB, BH, BM, SP, AW, DL, AvZ and JO  
28  
29 critically revised and commented on its previous versions and the final version. All authors critically  
30  
31 reviewed the manuscript and agreed on submission.  
32  
33

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36  
37  
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39  
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41  
42

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45  
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47  
48

### 49 50 **Declarations**

51  
52 The study protocol has been approved by the ethic committee of the German Society for Nursing  
53  
54 Science (21-037) and is registered in the German Clinical Trials Register (ID: DRKS0002599).  
55  
56

### 57 58 **Conflict of interest**

59  
60 ES, BH, and MB are employees of Electronic Caregiver, Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States

### Figure legend

Figure 1 Addison Care functions in German version (Reproduced with permission from <https://electroniccaregiver.com>)

Figure 2 Study flow, phenomenon of interest, instruments, data sets, and settings

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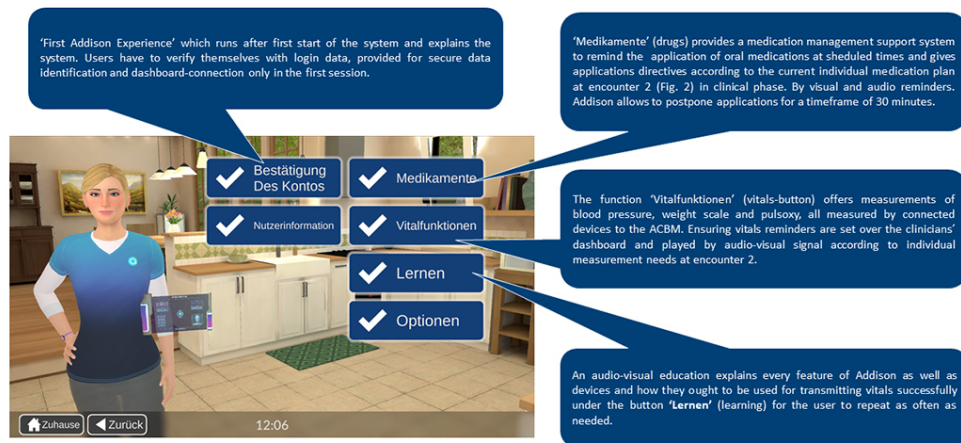
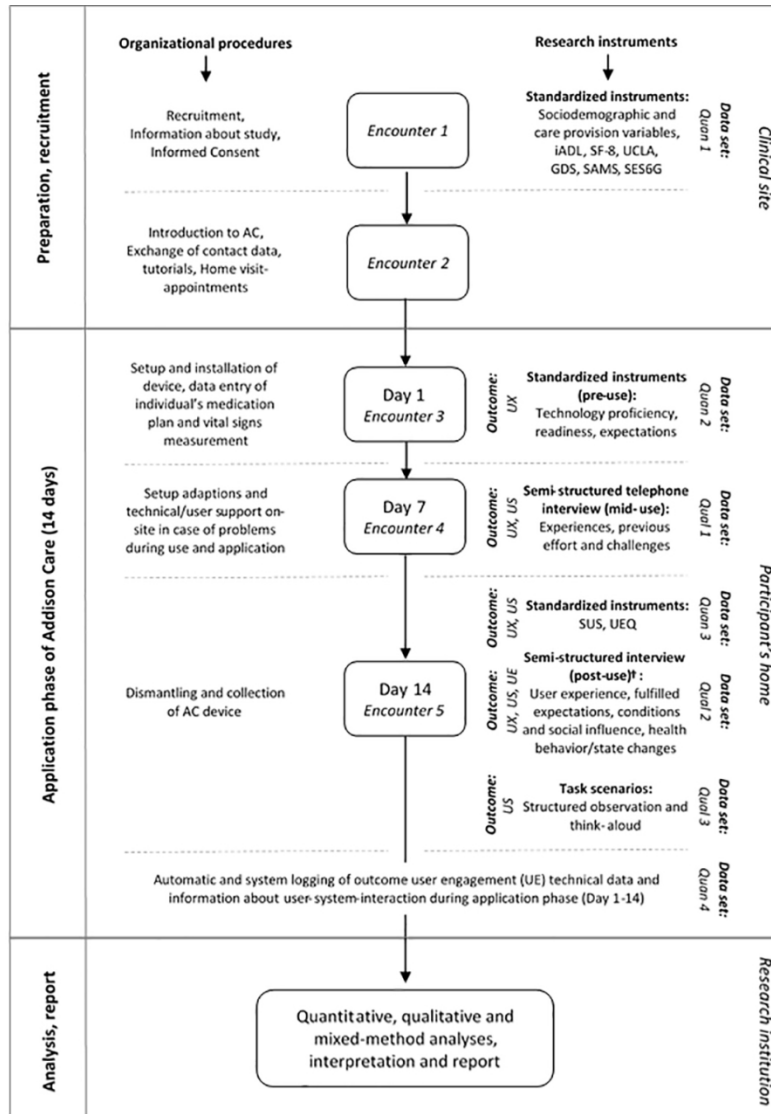


Figure 1: Addison Care functions in German version (Figure 1 reproduced with permission from <https://electroniccaregiver.com>)

90x50mm (300 x 300 DPI)





Notes: \* In case of the presence of relatives: semi-structured interview with relatives about their impressions and experiences towards AC; AC Addison Care, GDS Geriatric Depression Scale, iADL Instrumental Activities of Daily Living Scale, SAMS Stendal Adherence with Medication Score, SESGG Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Disease 6-item Scale, SF-8 Health Related Quality of Life Short-Form-8-Questionnaire, SUS System Usability Scale, UCLA University of California Los Angeles Loneliness Scale, UE User Engagement, UEQ User Experience Questionnaire, US Usability, UX User Experience

Figure 2: Study flow, phenomenon of interest, instruments, data sets, and settings

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## Supplement 1: SPIRIT Checklist



STANDARD PROTOCOL ITEMS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONAL TRIALS

SPIRIT 2013 Checklist: Recommended items to address in a clinical trial protocol and related documents\*

Section/item	Item No	Description	Protocol adherence: addressed on page number
<b>Administrative information</b>			
Title	1	Descriptive title identifying the study design, population, interventions, and, if applicable, trial acronym	Y:01
Trial registration	2a	Trial identifier and registry name. If not yet registered, name of intended registry	Y:02
	2b	All items from the World Health Organization Trial Registration Data Set	Y
Protocol version	3	Date and version identifier	NA
Funding	4	Sources and types of financial, material, and other support	Y:16
Roles and responsibilities	5a	Names, affiliations, and roles of protocol contributors	Y:01, 16
	5b	Name and contact information for the trial sponsor	Y:16
	5c	Role of study sponsor and funders, if any, in study design; collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of data; writing of the report; and the decision to submit the report for publication, including whether they will have ultimate authority over any of these activities	Y:16
	5d	Composition, roles, and responsibilities of the coordinating centre, steering committee, endpoint adjudication committee, data management team, and other individuals or groups overseeing the trial, if applicable (see Item 21a for data monitoring committee)	Y:09, 13

**Introduction**

1				
2	Background and rationale	6a	Description of research question and justification for undertaking the trial, including summary of relevant studies (published and unpublished) examining benefits and harms for each intervention	Y:03-06, 08
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7		6b	Explanation for choice of comparators	NA
8	Objectives	7	Specific objectives or hypotheses	Y:08
9				
10	Trial design	8	Description of trial design including type of trial (eg, parallel group, crossover, factorial, single group), allocation ratio, and framework (eg, superiority, equivalence, noninferiority, exploratory)	Y:08
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17	<b>Methods: Participants, interventions, and outcomes</b>			
18				
19	Study setting	9	Description of study settings (eg, community clinic, academic hospital) and list of countries where data will be collected. Reference to where list of study sites can be obtained	Y:09, Figure 2
20				
21				
22	Eligibility criteria	10	Inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants. If applicable, eligibility criteria for study centres and individuals who will perform the interventions (eg, surgeons, psychotherapists)	Y:09
23				
24				
25	Interventions	11a	Interventions for each group with sufficient detail to allow replication, including how and when they will be administered	Y:07-08, Figure 2
26				
27		11b	Criteria for discontinuing or modifying allocated interventions for a given trial participant (eg, drug dose change in response to harms, participant request, or improving/worsening disease)	Y:13
28				
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30	Outcomes	11c	Strategies to improve adherence to intervention protocols, and any procedures for monitoring adherence (eg, drug tablet return, laboratory tests)	Y:09-11, Figure 2
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32		11d	Relevant concomitant care and interventions that are permitted or prohibited during the trial	NA
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2	Participant	13	Time schedule of enrolment, interventions (including any	Y:09, Figure
3	timeline		run-ins and washouts), assessments, and visits for	2
4			participants. A schematic diagram is highly	
5			recommended (see Figure)	
6				
7	Sample size	14	Estimated number of participants needed to achieve	Y:09
8			study objectives and how it was determined, including	
9			clinical and statistical assumptions supporting any	
10			sample size calculations	
11				
12				
13	Recruitment	15	Strategies for achieving adequate participant enrolment	Y:09
14			to reach target sample size	
15				

### Methods: Assignment of interventions (for controlled trials)

#### Allocation:

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20	Sequence	16a	Method of generating the allocation sequence (eg,	NA
21	generation		computer-generated random numbers), and list of any	
22			factors for stratification. To reduce predictability of a	
23			random sequence, details of any planned restriction (eg,	
24			blocking) should be provided in a separate document that	
25			is unavailable to those who enrol participants or assign	
26			interventions	
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30	Allocation	16b	Mechanism of implementing the allocation sequence (eg,	NA
31	concealment		central telephone; sequentially numbered, opaque,	
32	mechanism		sealed envelopes), describing any steps to conceal the	
33			sequence until interventions are assigned	
34				
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36	Implementation	16c	Who will generate the allocation sequence, who will enrol	NA
37			participants, and who will assign participants to	
38			interventions	
39				
40	Blinding	17a	Who will be blinded after assignment to interventions (eg,	NA
41	(masking)		trial participants, care providers, outcome assessors,	
42			data analysts), and how	
43				
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45		17b	If blinded, circumstances under which unblinding is	NA
46			permissible, and procedure for revealing a participant's	
47			allocated intervention during the trial	
48				

### Methods: Data collection, management, and analysis

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51	Data collection	18a	Plans for assessment and collection of outcome,	Y:10-13
52	methods		baseline, and other trial data, including any related	
53			processes to promote data quality (eg, duplicate	
54			measurements, training of assessors) and a description	
55			of study instruments (eg, questionnaires, laboratory	
56			tests) along with their reliability and validity, if known.	
57			Reference to where data collection forms can be found, if	
58			not in the protocol	
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2		18b	Plans to promote participant retention and complete	Y
3			follow-up, including list of any outcome data to be	
4			collected for participants who discontinue or deviate from	
5			intervention protocols	
6				
7	Data	19	Plans for data entry, coding, security, and storage,	Y: 12-13
8	management		including any related processes to promote data quality	
9			(eg, double data entry; range checks for data values).	
10			Reference to where details of data management	
11			procedures can be found, if not in the protocol	
12				
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14	Statistical	20a	Statistical methods for analysing primary and secondary	Y: 14-15
15	methods		outcomes. Reference to where other details of the	
16			statistical analysis plan can be found, if not in the	
17			protocol	
18				
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20		20b	Methods for any additional analyses (eg, subgroup and	X
21			adjusted analyses)	
22				
23		20c	Definition of analysis population relating to protocol non-	X
24			adherence (eg, as randomised analysis), and any	
25			statistical methods to handle missing data (eg, multiple	
26			imputation)	
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29	<b>Methods: Monitoring</b>			
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31	Data monitoring	21a	Composition of data monitoring committee (DMC);	X
32			summary of its role and reporting structure; statement of	
33			whether it is independent from the sponsor and	
34			competing interests; and reference to where further	
35			details about its charter can be found, if not in the	
36			protocol. Alternatively, an explanation of why a DMC is	
37			not needed	
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41		21b	Description of any interim analyses and stopping	Y: 13
42			guidelines, including who will have access to these	
43			interim results and make the final decision to terminate	
44			the trial	
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46	Harms	22	Plans for collecting, assessing, reporting, and managing	Y: 13
47			solicited and spontaneously reported adverse events and	
48			other unintended effects of trial interventions or trial	
49			conduct	
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52	Auditing	23	Frequency and procedures for auditing trial conduct, if	X
53			any, and whether the process will be independent from	
54			investigators and the sponsor	
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57	<b>Ethics and dissemination</b>			
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2	Research ethics approval	24	Plans for seeking research ethics committee/institutional review board (REC/IRB) approval	Y: 14
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5	Protocol amendments	25	Plans for communicating important protocol modifications (eg, changes to eligibility criteria, outcomes, analyses) to relevant parties (eg, investigators, REC/IRBs, trial participants, trial registries, journals, regulators)	Y: 14
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10	Consent or assent	26a	Who will obtain informed consent or assent from potential trial participants or authorised surrogates, and how (see Item 32)	Y: 09
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15		26b	Additional consent provisions for collection and use of participant data and biological specimens in ancillary studies, if applicable	NA
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19	Confidentiality	27	How personal information about potential and enrolled participants will be collected, shared, and maintained in order to protect confidentiality before, during, and after the trial	Y: 13-15
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25	Declaration of interests	28	Financial and other competing interests for principal investigators for the overall trial and each study site	Y: 16
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28	Access to data	29	Statement of who will have access to the final trial dataset, and disclosure of contractual agreements that limit such access for investigators	NA
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33	Ancillary and post-trial care	30	Provisions, if any, for ancillary and post-trial care, and for compensation to those who suffer harm from trial participation	NA
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37	Dissemination policy	31a	Plans for investigators and sponsor to communicate trial results to participants, healthcare professionals, the public, and other relevant groups (eg, via publication, reporting in results databases, or other data sharing arrangements), including any publication restrictions	Y: 15
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44		31b	Authorship eligibility guidelines and any intended use of professional writers	NA
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48		31c	Plans, if any, for granting public access to the full protocol, participant-level dataset, and statistical code	X
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51	<b>Appendices</b>			
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53	Informed consent materials	32	Model consent form and other related documentation given to participants and authorised surrogates	X
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2 Biological 33 Plans for collection, laboratory evaluation, and storage of NA  
3 specimens biological specimens for genetic or molecular analysis in  
4 the current trial and for future use in ancillary studies, if  
5 applicable  
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For peer review only

Ethikkommission der DGP • Stockumer Straße 12 • 58453 Witten

Paracelsus Medizinische Privatuniversität  
Herrn Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Jürgen Osterbrink  
Vorstand des Instituts für Pflegewissenschaft und -praxis  
Strubergasse 21  
A - 5020 Salzburg



Deutsche Gesellschaft für Pflegewissenschaft  
(DGP) e. V.  
Geschäftsstelle  
Bürgerstr. 47  
47057 Duisburg

Telefon: 0203 – 356793  
info@dg-pflegewissenschaft.de

Ethikkommission der Deutschen Gesellschaft  
für Pflegewissenschaft  
(DGP) e.V.  
Vorsitz Prof. Dr. Sabine Bartholomeyczik  
Stockumer Str. 12  
58453 Witten

[Ethikkommission@dg-pflegewissenschaft.de](mailto:Ethikkommission@dg-pflegewissenschaft.de)

Your proposal no. 21-037 to the ethical review committee of the German Society of Nursing Science (EK-DGP)

Dear Mr. Osterbrink,

the EK-DGP discussed and evaluated your proposal

*A pilot study of Addison Care, the Virtual Telecare Technology, - PiloTT-A (application no. 21-037)*  
submitted 2021-11-16.

The committee decided to give you an ethical approval.

Good luck for the project!

2021-12-27

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sabine Bartholomeyczik', is written over the printed name.

Prof. Dr. Sabine Bartholomeyczik  
Chairperson EK-DGP



# BMJ Open

## Piloting of the virtual telecare technology 'Addison Care' to promote self-management in persons with chronic diseases in a community setting: protocol for a mixed methods user experience, user engagement and usability pilot study

Journal:	<i>BMJ Open</i>
Manuscript ID	bmjopen-2022-062159.R2
Article Type:	Protocol
Date Submitted by the Author:	19-Aug-2022
Complete List of Authors:	Krutter, Simon; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Schuessler, Nadine; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Kutschar, Patrick; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Šabić, Edin; New Mexico State University, Department of Psychology; Electronic Caregiver Inc Dellinger, Johanna; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Klausner, Tabea; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Nestler, Nadja; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Beasley, Morgan; Electronic Caregiver Inc Henderson, Bailey; Electronic Caregiver Inc Pitzer, Stefan; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Mitterlehner, Barbara; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Langegger, Doris; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Winkler, Anna; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Kloesch, Michael; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice EBl-Maurer, Roland; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice van der Zee-Neuen, Antje; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Osterbrink, Jürgen; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice; University of North Florida, Brooks College of Health
<b>Primary Subject Heading</b>:	Nursing
Secondary Subject Heading:	Health services research

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Keywords:	PRIMARY CARE, PREVENTIVE MEDICINE, GERIATRIC MEDICINE

SCHOLARONE™  
Manuscripts

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3 **Piloting of the virtual telecare technology ‘Addison Care’ to promote self-management in persons**  
4 **with chronic diseases in a community setting: protocol for a mixed methods user experience, user**  
5 **engagement and usability pilot study**  
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10  
11 **Authors:** Simon Krutter<sup>1</sup>, Nadine Schuessler<sup>1</sup>, Patrick Kutschar<sup>1</sup>, Edin Šabić<sup>2,3</sup>, Johanna Dellinger<sup>1</sup>,  
12  
13 Tabea Klausner<sup>1</sup>, Nadja Nestler<sup>1</sup>, Morgan Beasley<sup>3</sup>, Bailey Henderson<sup>3</sup>, Stefan Pitzer<sup>1</sup>, Barbara  
14  
15 Mitterlehner<sup>1</sup>, Doris Langegger<sup>1</sup>, Anna Winkler<sup>1</sup>, Michael Kloesch<sup>1</sup>, Roland Eßl-Maurer<sup>1</sup>, Antje van der  
16  
17 Zee-Neuen<sup>1</sup>, Jürgen Osterbrink<sup>1,4</sup>  
18  
19

20  
21 **Affiliations**  
22

23  
24 <sup>1</sup> Institute of Nursing Science and Practice, Paracelsus Medical University, Salzburg, Austria  
25

26 <sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States  
27

28 <sup>3</sup> Electronic Caregiver Inc., Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States  
29

30 <sup>4</sup> Brooks College of Health, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida, United States  
31  
32

33 **Corresponding Author Information**  
34

35  
36 Simon Krutter  
37

38  
39 Institute of Nursing Science and Practice, Paracelsus Medical University, Salzburg, Austria  
40

41  
42 Strubergasse 21, 5020 Salzburg, Austria  
43

44  
45 Email: [simon.krutter@pmu.ac.at](mailto:simon.krutter@pmu.ac.at)  
46

47  
48 Phone: +43 662 2024 80341  
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50  
51 ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5788-9574  
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58 **ABSTRACT** (293 words)  
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3 **Introduction:** Chronic diseases in older adults are one of the major epidemiological challenges of  
4 current times and leading cause of disability, poor quality of life, high health care costs, and death.  
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6 Self-management of chronic diseases is essential to improve health behaviors and health outcomes.  
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9 Technology-assisted interventions have shown to improve self-management of chronic diseases.  
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11 Virtual avatars can be a key factor for the acceptance of these technologies. Addison Care is a home-  
12 based telecare solution equipped with a virtual avatar named Addison, connecting older persons with  
13  
14 their caregivers via an easy-to-use technology. A central advantage is that Addison care provides access  
15  
16 to self-management support for an up-to-now highly underrepresented population - older persons  
17  
18 with chronic disease(s), which enables them to profit from e-health in everyday life.  
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24 **Methods and analysis:** A pragmatic, non-randomized, one-arm pilot study applying an embedded  
25 mixed-methods approach will be conducted to examine user experience, usability, and user  
26  
27 engagement of the virtual avatar Addison. Participants will be at least 65 years old and will be recruited  
28  
29 between September 2022 and November 2022 from hospitals during the discharge process to home  
30  
31 care. Standardized instruments, namely the User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ), System Usability  
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33 Scale (SUS), Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (iADL) scale, Short-Form-8-Questionnaire (SF-8),  
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35 UCLA Loneliness Scale, Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS), Stendal Adherence with Medication Score  
36  
37 (SAMS) and Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Diseases Scale (SESG6), as well as survey-based  
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39 assessments, semi-structured interviews and think-aloud protocols will be used. The study seeks to  
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41 enroll 20 patients that meet the criteria.  
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48 **Ethics and dissemination:** The study protocol has been approved by the ethic committee of the  
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50 German Society for Nursing Science (21-037). The results are intended to be published in peer-  
51  
52 reviewed journals and disseminated through conference papers.  
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56 **Trial registration number:** German Clinical Trials Register (ID: DRKS00025992).  
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3 **Keywords:** Telecare, virtual avatar, older people, chronic disease self-management, pilot study, user  
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5 experience, e-health;  
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#### 8 9 **STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

- 10  
11  
12 - This pilot study provides an opportunity to explore the acceptability of and experiences with  
13 a potentially beneficial e-health technology in the underrepresented population of  
14 chronically ill older persons in a telecare setting.  
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17 - The mixed-methods study design will provide a deep and broad insight on usability, user  
18 experience and user engagement of Addison care as a German-speaking, culturally adapted  
19 virtual avatar.  
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22 - This investigation evaluates the efficacy of a sophisticated virtual avatar, Addison, in assisting  
23 with many crucial health management tasks – including medication management and health  
24 vitals monitoring.  
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27 - A focus on barriers to user-engagement for those who are technologically hesitant will  
28 provide rich information concerning how best to design virtual avatars and e-health  
29 technologies to match user needs and mental models.  
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32 - The primary limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size due to our selective  
33 inclusion criteria, which may diminish the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of our sample.  
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#### 47 **BACKGROUND**

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49 Societies across the globe are facing a significant shift in age demographics whereby older adults are  
50 becoming an increasingly larger group within their population. This phenomenon is one of the most  
51 salient economic, social, and medical issues of current times.[1] Aging increases both the risk for most  
52 chronic diseases and for multimorbidity. Between 34% and 61% of older adults are multimorbid [2],  
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3 which can have consequences such as disability and functional decline, poor quality of life, social  
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5 isolation, depression, and high health care costs.[3, 4]  
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8 Patients themselves have an integral role in the management of their chronic disease.[5] Factors that  
9  
10 influence effective self-management of chronic disease include: experience, skill, motivation, culture,  
11  
12 confidence, habits, physical and mental function, social support, and access to care.[6]  
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16 Self-management of chronic diseases is defined as the response to signs and symptoms when they  
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18 occur, with the goal that patients play an active role in optimising health outcomes and minimizing the  
19  
20 impact of their conditions.[6] Self-management support refers to patient, healthcare professional, and  
21  
22 healthcare system interventions aimed to improve self-management behaviours.[7] Self-monitoring  
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24 vitals [8] and medication adherence have been recognized as two of the most essential self-  
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26 management activities performed by patients to promote their health.[9]  
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29  
30 Although interventions designed to promote self-management in chronic diseases have traditionally  
31  
32 been offered in-person, delivering these interventions remotely utilizing available technology (e.g.,  
33  
34 mobile smart phones, Internet, interactive voice response, telephone, virtual reality) has become more  
35  
36 prevalent.[10] These technology-assisted interventions have shown to improve self-management and  
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38 health status.[11, 12]  
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42 Digital information technologies support people with care requirements to maintain their  
43  
44 independence, improve quality of life, increase health literacy and aid caregivers in their duties.[13,  
45  
46 14] Telehealth is one of the fastest-growing sectors in health care. The term refers to a broad array of  
47  
48 provider-to-patient communication and has been defined as using telecommunications, information  
49  
50 technologies, and devices to share information and to provide clinical, population health, and  
51  
52 administrative services at a distance.[15] Remote patient monitoring is a widely used telehealth  
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54 intervention that can effectively support self-management in patients with chronic diseases.[7]  
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### 58 **Remote Patient Monitoring**

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3 Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) is a promising solution for facilitating the patient-physician  
4 relationship while addressing the shortage of healthcare workers today.  
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8 Studies concerning the efficacy of RPM has spanned the topics of post-operative rehospitalization,  
9 chronic disease management, medication adherence, and quality of life and has shown promising  
10 results.[16-20] However, RPM technology can only benefit patients who choose to actively interact  
11 with the devices. As compared to younger users, elderly users also face unique challenges that are a  
12 direct result of aging – such as declines in dexterity, hearing, and vision. As a result, researchers have  
13 identified that improving ease of navigation for task completion, ensuring appropriate size and color  
14 of font, and properly configuring the size of the hardware itself are paramount in addressing  
15 technological hesitancy.[21]  
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### 26 27 **Virtual Avatars** 28

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30 Graphic user interfaces, which can improve the user experience and personalize the experience for the  
31 user through virtual avatars, have begun to be incorporated into RPM systems. Virtual avatars are an  
32 emerging feature in RPM that has shown propitious results in terms of user engagement, health  
33 education, and self-care behavior.[22]  
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40 One important factor in the receptiveness of patients to virtual avatars is the avatar's appearance. Bott  
41 [23] investigated the impact of a virtual pet avatar to deliver surveys to older clients. They found that  
42 those who interacted with the avatar experienced lower rates of delirium, fewer falls, and decreased  
43 loneliness. However, research has generally shown that anthropomorphic characteristics are often  
44 preferable for virtual healthcare avatars [24] – as well as similarities in appearance between the avatar  
45 and the user.[25] Previous literature has revealed that when designing virtual agents for older persons,  
46 key factors related to acceptance of technology include conversational latency, gamification, and  
47 artificially intelligent lexicon.[26]  
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### 58 **User experience and technology acceptance among older persons** 59 60

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3 Understanding how older adults perceive technology and virtual avatars may lead to improvements in  
4 the accessibility, acceptability, and adoption of virtual avatars among older persons with chronic  
5 diseases. This can be accomplished through user experience (UX) research, wherein the overall  
6 experience of the user is assessed through measures related to usability, user engagement, usefulness,  
7 function, credibility, and satisfaction with the technology.[27] While behavior, cognition, and affect  
8 are important defining components of user engagement [28], learnability, efficiency, memorability,  
9 few errors and satisfaction are defining components of usability.[29] UX is based upon User-Centered  
10 Design (UCD), wherein the needs and characteristics of the end user become the focus of technology  
11 design and development, with the intention of higher acceptance and fewer user errors.[30]

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24 Theories that predict and explain health technology acceptance and use can help to tailor the  
25 technology to specific patient needs. One of the more recent models, the Unified Theory of Acceptance  
26 and Use of Technology (UTAUT) [31], posits that a person's intent to use [acceptance of technology]  
27 and usage behavior (actual use) of a technology is predicated by the patient's performance and effort  
28 expectancy of the technology. The UTAUT also suggests social influence and facilitating conditions as  
29 determinants of behavioral intention to use the technology.[31, 32] Most older persons are  
30 significantly less adept at technology use than the general population, with technology anxiety being  
31 a major influence on older users' intent to use technologies.[33] However, older adults are interested  
32 in integrating new technologies into their healthcare.[34] Studies confirm the applicability of the  
33 UTAUT in the context of Telecare services among older persons.[35]

#### 46 47 **Intervention: Addison Care Tablet Personal Computer (PC)**

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50 The present research pilots an intervention provided by Addison Care [36], which is an innovative  
51 home-bound connected virtual RPM platform for individuals living with chronic disease. A 3D-  
52 animated nurse named 'Addison' is the center of interaction between the system and its users,  
53 personifying the telehealth experience for the user. The pilot study encompasses two health-related  
54 functions of Addison Care: 'Addison' supporting the user in self-monitoring relevant vitals (blood  
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3 pressure, weight, pulse and oxygen saturation) as well as medication schedule adherence. This is  
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5 achieved by offering reminder and monitoring functionalities (see Fig. 1).  
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8 [Figure 1 about here]  
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11 The Addison Care hardware consists of a tablet PC with a speaker, a microphone module, and a touch  
12  
13 screen (see Figure 1). The tablet connects with Bluetooth vitals measuring devices and can be installed  
14  
15 in a user's home. Avatar technology combined with natural language understanding and automatic  
16  
17 speech recognition provides users with effective natural interaction with the assisting technology.[22,  
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19 26] Subtitles, vital signs, and medications are graphically illustrated on the Addison Care interface for  
20  
21 clear communication between the virtual agent and the user.  
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25 The Addison Tablet PC is connected to a web-based dashboard that allows access to user data,  
26  
27 including vitals measurements and medication reminders. For the pilot study, medication plans,  
28  
29 reminder-options, and contact information are managed by members of the study team, who also act  
30  
31 as a support team for the technical set-up and in case of technical problems. The intervention in this  
32  
33 study involves voice-driven audio-centered interaction between Addison and users in German, as well  
34  
35 as the implementation of a German touch screen interface. Introduction of Addison Care to German  
36  
37 users requires adaption of the original technology to ensure a good cultural fit. Adaptations were made  
38  
39 to the surroundings of the avatar, as well as to Addison's mannerisms. Additionally, changes were  
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41 made to the system to ensure a good fit between system and real life in terms of interactive elements  
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43 [from basics ensuring appropriate data and time formats to more complex elements like making sure  
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45 the avatar interacts in a culturally appropriate manner with the user). Voice and touch interaction  
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47 modes are currently adapted from English into German. All piloted features of Addison Care are shown  
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52 in Fig. 1.  
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## 54 **Objectives**

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3 While other studies have provided insight into the potential of digital health technology and virtual  
4 avatars, the vast majority have been tested within laboratory settings, where older adults were unable  
5 to interact with the technology in a natural environment. Additionally, the digital health systems and  
6 virtual avatars were not culturally adapted after development.  
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12 The study aims to explore the feasibility, acceptability, experience, engagement, and usability of the  
13 culturally tailored health technology and the virtual avatar Addison for self-management for older  
14 patients with chronic diseases in their own home.  
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## 19 20 21 **METHODS AND ANALYSIS**

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24 A pragmatic, non-randomized, one-arm pilot study applying an embedded mixed-methods approach  
25 will be conducted to examine the primary outcomes 'user experience', 'usability', and 'user  
26 engagement' of the virtual avatar Addison three times within the use span. 'Embedded' refers to the  
27 integration of qualitative methods into a quantitative methodology framework, or vice versa, to  
28 provide enriched insights or understanding into the phenomena of interest.[31, 37] The study design  
29 is pluralistic, problem-centered, real-world applicable, and focused on the consequences of actions,  
30 stemming from pragmatism as a research paradigm.[37] The present protocol followed the SPIRIT  
31 guidelines (see Supplementary 1).[38] Data collection will take place between September 2022 and  
32 November 2022.  
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### 45 46 **Recruitment criteria and process**

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48 Eligible patients will be identified by medical specialists in in German hospitals. The inclusion criteria  
49 are as follows:  
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- 52 - Planned patients transition from hospital to extramural care
  - 53 - Three to nine drugs (regular intake of drugs, no status of hypermedication)
  - 54 - 65 years or older with a chronic health condition
  - 55 - Ability to speak and understand German language
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3 The exclusion criteria are:  
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6 - Ten or more drugs per day  
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8 - Younger than 65 years old  
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10 - Moderate to severe cognitive impairment or severe psychiatric disorders  
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14 Provided that these criteria are met and general interest in using health technology is expressed,  
15  
16 information about the pilot study and the intervention will be shared. If a patient declares the will to  
17  
18 participate, a meeting with the support team will be arranged while the patient is still at the hospital.  
19  
20 Potential participants will be informed of all aspects of the study through verbal instruction and written  
21  
22 materials (Figure 2, Encounter 1). After written informed consent (see Supplementary 2) is provided,  
23  
24 living situation and socio-demographic data will be assessed by research assistants.  
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### 27 28 **Setting and sample size** 29

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31 Addison Care will be piloted in participants' homes, located in a community setting, after their  
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33 discharge from hospital for two consecutive weeks. In Encounter 2 (see Figure 2) within 1 day after the  
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35 informed consent is provided, the support team will give first instructions on Addison Care while the  
36  
37 participant is still hospitalized. First adjustments of reminder, medication plan, and vital measurements  
38  
39 will be provisioned for the use of Addison Tablet PC at home. This study seeks to enroll 20 patients.  
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41 The sample size is an adequate number to evaluate study feasibility, test the study procedures and  
42  
43 explore the user experience.[39, 40]  
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### 48 **Patient and public involvement** 49

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51 In advance of the pilot study, older adults assisted in the development of the data collection materials  
52  
53 and pre-testing of Addison Care. However, patients and the public were not involved in the  
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55 development of the research question, outcome measures and the design of the study.  
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### 58 **Outcomes, Instruments, and Variables** 59 60

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3 Building upon the theoretical concepts of technology acceptance (UTAUT), we will assess user  
4 experience, usability, and user engagement (primary outcomes), as well as participant background  
5 information (e.g., sociodemographic, care provision) and health status-associated phenomena  
6  
7 (functional status, quality of life and wellbeing, loneliness, depression, medication adherence, and self-  
8 management) using standardized, quantitative and semi-standardized qualitative research  
9 instruments (see Figure 2).  
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### 16 17 **Standardized research instruments**

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20 *User experience.* The German version of the User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ) [41] will be used to  
21 assess user experience. The UEQ consists of 26 items along six scales: attractiveness (6 items,  
22 Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha=0.89$ ), perspicuity (4 items,  $\alpha=0.82$ ), efficiency (4 items,  $\alpha=0.73$ ), dependability (4  
23 items,  $\alpha=0.65$ ), stimulation (4 items,  $\alpha=0.76$ ), and novelty (4 items,  $\alpha=0.83$ ).[41, 42] Each item  
24 represents a 7-point rating scale (-3 most negative rating, +3 most positive rating) of properties that  
25 the product under study may have. An average score is computed for each scale.  
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35 *Usability.* To assess the usability of Addison Care, the validated German version of the System Usability  
36 Scale (SUS) will be applied.[43] The SUS [44] consists of 10 items and is a standardized, generic  
37 instrument for assessing the usability of technical applications, mobile applications, or devices. Internal  
38 consistency has been reported to range between  $\alpha=0.70$  to 0.95.[45] The SUS consists of 10 items,  
39 each with five-point rating scales (1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree). The standardized scoring of  
40 the SUS results in a total score between 0 to 100 points using a given norm-based scoring  
41 algorithm.[45]  
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51 *User engagement.* Automatic system and data logging information will be used to measure user  
52 engagement in terms of intensity and type of interactions between users and Addison Care. This non-  
53 participatory data collection, e.g., documenting data using automatically protocolled technical  
54 variables without having asked questions or the presence of an observer, will provide essential  
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3 information on the actual use, used functions, and user engagement with certain contents of the  
4  
5 product of interest.[46-48]  
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8 *Functional status.* The German translation [49] of the Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (iADL) scale  
9  
10 [50] will be applied to assess patients' functional status in terms of activities of daily living. The iADL is  
11  
12 a standardized instrument that measures functionality related to eight domains of daily living. It has  
13  
14 reported reliability coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.91.[51] Each domain is measured using either  
15  
16 three or four ability levels with 0 or 1 point per domain, resulting in a summary score of 8 points at  
17  
18 maximum. Due to a strong reference of some items to household aspects, gender-specific scores will  
19  
20 be used, e.g., 0 (low function, dependent) to 8 (high function, independent) for women and 0 to 5 for  
21  
22 men, respectively.[51]  
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27 *Quality of life.* Health-related quality of life will be measured by the German version of the Short-Form-  
28  
29 8-Questionnaire (SF-8).[52] The SF-8 assesses the 8 dimensions physical functioning, role physical (role  
30  
31 limitations because of physical health), bodily pain, general health, vitality, social functioning, role  
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33 emotional (role limitations because of emotional problems), and mental health, by one item each, and  
34  
35 along two scales 'physical component summary score' and 'mental component summary score'. The  
36  
37 items comprise of five- or six-point response scales that verbalize the extent to which each dimension  
38  
39 is present. In addition to single-item analysis, the two summary scores will be measured using a given  
40  
41 norm-based scoring method. Next to an adequate test-retest reliability [52], an overall internal  
42  
43 consistency between  $\alpha=0.86$  and 0.92 have been reported.[53]  
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48 *Loneliness.* To assess participants' perception of social isolation and loneliness, the shortened, 3-item  
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50 German version [54, 55] of the UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) Loneliness Scale will be  
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52 applied. Each item exhibits a five-level response scale (very often, often, sometimes, rarely, never) and  
53  
54 will be analysed item-by-item. Cronbach's alpha for the 3-item loneliness scale was 0.72.[54]  
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58 *Depression.* The German translation [56] of the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) will be used to  
59  
60 evaluate the presence of depression.[57, 58] The 8-item version will be applied to make the survey as

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3 time-efficient as possible.[59] Participants are asked about selected symptoms of depressive states  
4  
5 over the past week using a dichotomous response format (no vs. yes). The total sum score of the GDS-8  
6  
7 is 0-8 points. Internal consistency with  $\alpha > 0.80$  has been shown [59]. A recommended cut-off score of  
8  
9 GDS $\geq 3$  indicating relevant indications of depression will be applied.

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13 *Medication adherence.* Participants' adherence to their medication regimen will be measured by the  
14  
15 Stendal Adherence with Medication Score (SAMS).[60] SAMS consists of 18 items on a five-level  
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17 response scale (0-4) assessing fully adherent to nonadherent medication behaviour per item.[61]  
18  
19 Responses are summarized into a cumulative point scale (0-72), which can be categorized as fully  
20  
21 adherent (0), moderately adherent (1-10), and not adherent (>10). An overall internal consistency of  
22  
23  $\alpha = 0.83$  has been reported.[61]

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26  
27 *Self-management.* To assess participant's Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Diseases (SESG6), the  
28  
29 German version of the 6-item scale will be used.[62] The six items are rated with a 10-level Likert-type  
30  
31 scale (1 'not at all confident' to 10 'totally confident'). A mean score over at least four of the six items  
32  
33 will be calculated, thus allowing a maximum of two missing item responses. SESG6 has been attested  
34  
35 a high internal consistency measure of  $\alpha = 0.93$ . [62]

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39 *Technology proficiency, readiness, and expectations.* A standardized face-to-face interview prior to the  
40  
41 use of Addison Care ('pre-use interview') will be performed to collect information on participant  
42  
43 technology proficiency and readiness (7 items) in terms of experience with and use of general  
44  
45 information and communication technologies (3 items) as well as expectations regarding the upcoming  
46  
47 use of the Addison Care technology (6 items). These closed-ended questions were derived from  
48  
49 empirical and theoretical literature [31, 32, 63] and further adapted by the research team.

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53 *Sociodemographic and care provision variables.* Sociodemographic and care-relevant variables will be  
54  
55 collected by means of a short, standardized 9-item questionnaire. Age of participants, gender, living  
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57 situation, place of residence in terms of urbanization, care provision by relatives, and care provision  
58  
59 by ambulant/mobile care service will be assessed using closed-ended questions. Information on  
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3 documented primary diagnoses and existing additional chronic diseases will be collected using open-  
4 ended questions and categorized applying the 11th revision of the International Classification of  
5 Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11).[64]  
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### 10 **Semi-standardized research instruments**

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13 *First experiences and encountered technical obstacles.* A qualitative, semi-structured brief telephone  
14 interview ('mid-use interview') with users after one week of Addison interaction will be conducted.  
15 Information about users' experiences to date, as well as previous effort and encountered challenges  
16 in using the Addison Care technology will be collected. The user reports are to be recorded in an open-  
17 ended documentation sheet.  
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26 *User experience, fulfilled expectations, perceived enabling conditions for use and technology's social*  
27 *influence, and health behaviour.* A comprehensive qualitative, semi-structured, face-to-face interview  
28 will explore participants' perspectives with reference to the fulfilled expectations after the use of  
29 Addison Care ('post-use interview'), perceived enabling conditions, and social influence in the use of  
30 the technology, as well as the participant's experiences and adaptations of health behaviour. The  
31 interview guide questions on user experience are based on the respective literature on UX research  
32 [65], those on conditions and technology's social influence along the main factors of the UTAUT model  
33 [31, 32], and those on health behaviours were developed against the background of the Health Action  
34 Process Approach (HAPA).[66] The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. With reference  
35 to the embedded mixed-methods approach, the four most striking individual ratings of the previously  
36 collected standardized User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ) will be thematised and perceived changes  
37 in secondary outcomes (functional status, quality of life, loneliness, depression, medication  
38 adherence) will be assessed using open-ended questions. To address their perspectives on the use of  
39 Addison Care, an optional topical block of guided questions will be operationalized.  
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58 *Task performance scenario and think-aloud protocol.* Finally, to gain insight into user thoughts,  
59 decision-making processes, and how they experience the Addison Care technology, a structured  
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3 observation with an accompanying think-aloud protocol will be applied.[67] Participants will be asked  
4  
5 to perform a set of specific tasks with Addison Care while verbally expressing their immediate  
6  
7 thoughts, and explaining their reactions during system interaction. Task performance and participant  
8  
9 comments will be documented using a structured observation sheet.  
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12  
13 [Figure 2 about here]  
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### 16 **User safety and data management**

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18 During the two weeks study period, medical emergencies, acute deterioration in health or care needs,  
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20 patients' feelings of insecurity, or hospital admissions will constitute reasons to end the participation  
21  
22 early. Formal health services in the community setting will be informed about the use of Addison Care  
23  
24 by their clients. Informal caregivers of the participants will be educated about Addison Care and are  
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26 instructed to contact the support team in need of help (see Figure 2).  
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31 Figure 2 provides detailed information on the different data retrieved during participants'  
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33 enrolment. Personal information of participants will be accessed by the support team only, who will  
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35 monitor the dashboard and assist with any user problems. Dashboard access is granted by login data  
36  
37 provided by Addison Care USA.  
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41 All data retrieved empirically (see figure 2) will be saved on study-specific computers during data  
42  
43 collection and stored in password-protected folders on the support team storage after completed data  
44  
45 collection. User engagement data will be stored on Addison Tablet PC for short periods of time being  
46  
47 but regularly exported onto the server from the clinical dashboard and after the end of the pilot study  
48  
49 transferred to study-specific computers. All personal data will be stored at a server in Berlin in  
50  
51 Germany and encrypted. According to European Union General Data Protection Regulations,  
52  
53 participants have the right to view all stored data or choose to delete their data at any given time as  
54  
55 long as their data has not been anonymized by code yet.  
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### 59 **Analysis**

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3 Various data will be organized and triangulated in data sets Quan 1-4 and Qual 1-3 (see Figure 2) for  
4 analysis that fit the relevant phenomenon of interest. Final integration of overall results will take place  
5 upon conclusion of the study [37] and will be summarized with a joint display by using a mixed methods  
6 matrix.[68]  
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12 Participants` characteristics will be statistically described using information on socio-demographics,  
13 living and care provision, quality of life, health literacy, activities of daily living, and medication  
14 adherence (Quan 1, Figure 2).  
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19  
20 A thematic content analysis of the qualitative data gained from interviews and observations in  
21 encounters 4 and 5 (see Figure 2) will be performed, expanding the deductively developed code by  
22 inductive inputs.[69] Deductive codes prepared from theoretical pre-considerations will include the  
23 concepts of user experience as well as usability. Coding strategy will separate the two phenomena  
24 during the coding process. User experience results will be produced by triangulating the results of the  
25 User Experience Questionnaire (Quan 3) as well as code system elements gathered in qualitative data  
26 sets (Qual 1, 2, 3). These three data sets will provide usability results after interviews are transcribed  
27 and coded. The codes will then be merged with the SUS results (Quan 3) to get a clear picture of  
28 obstacles and acceptance. User Engagement data will track usage events like logins, reminders, and  
29 overall Addison-user-interaction over the 2-week usage period - resulting in data set Quan 4 (see Figure  
30 2). To facilitate the subsequent main study, deductive codes for the area of a feasibility study are also  
31 included in the coding strategy.[70] All quantitative data will be analyzed using common descriptive  
32 statistics.  
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## 50 **Ethics and dissemination**

### 51 **Ethical considerations**

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57 This pilot study was approved by the ethics committee of the German Society for Nursing Science (21-  
58 037) to ensure that the research is done in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and in line with  
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3 the current legislation authority (see Supplementary 3). The pilot study is registered in the German  
4  
5 Clinical Trials Register (ID: DRKS00025992).  
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## 8 **Overview**

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10  
11 This protocol presents research that assesses the feasibility, acceptability, experience, engagement,  
12  
13 and usability of Addison Care – a health technology and virtual avatar for older persons with chronic  
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15 diseases in their own home.  
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19 For this purpose, we culturally adopted the Addison Care technology and its functions (tutorial,  
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21 medication management, testing vital signs) to explore participants' acceptance and experiences of  
22  
23 the health technology and the virtual avatar.  
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26  
27 For older adults with chronic diseases, the overarching goal of self-management is to enhance their  
28  
29 quality of life and maintain independence, all while supporting formal and informal caregivers.  
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33 The goal of this pilot study is to further our understanding of the potential issues and challenges that  
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35 will be used as the foundations for a larger randomized control study.  
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39 One of the strengths of this study is the use of the health technology for a longer period of time and  
40  
41 with real patients in a natural setting. Another strength lies in the cultural adaption of the health  
42  
43 technology and its integration in a telecare framework. The integrated voice and touch interaction with  
44  
45 the avatar 'Addison' should also contribute to improve the human-computer interaction.  
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## 48 **Limitations**

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52 Possible limitations of the pilot study are the lack of results on usability or acceptance of the US  
53  
54 American version of Addison Care that we can refer to. Cultural adaption and translation into German  
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56 therefore might not be the only reason for a suboptimal user experience. Interviews allow to gain  
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58 insight into this issue. The effectiveness of the extensive data collection process has to be proven as  
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3 well as the recruitment process. The highly selective sample of the pilot study will diminish ethnical or  
4 socio-economic diversity which will be introduced thoroughly in the study following the pilot. Within  
5 the qualitative branch of the mixed-methods study we seek sufficient richness of data but do not  
6 expect to achieve a data saturation. The study's time line may be influenced by COVID-19 pandemic  
7 recruitment-wise as well as by pandemic regulations in Germany which cannot be foreseen at the  
8 current situation. Because we do not have an influence on the stability of the Internet connection, this  
9 could be another source of uncertainty. Finally, it is not the aim of the pilot study to show effects on  
10 the health status of the users. But the multiple instruments for testing health status-associated  
11 phenomena should provide adequacy to show such effects in a subsequent main study.  
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### 24 **Contributors**

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26 SK, NaS, JD, PK, NN, JO, ES, SP, MB, MK, REM and BM participated in the design of the study protocol.  
27  
28 SK, NaS, PK, JD, TK, and ES drafted the protocol manuscript. MB, BH, BM, SP, AW, DL, AvZ and JO  
29 critically revised and commented on its previous versions and the final version. All authors critically  
30 reviewed the manuscript and agreed on submission.  
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### 37 **Acknowledgements**

38  
39 We acknowledge the Department of General Practice and Health Services Research, University  
40 Hospital Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany for access to the German version of the SESG6.  
41  
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### 45 **Funding**

46  
47 This work is supported by Electronic Caregiver, Inc., Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA (no grant number)  
48  
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### 51 **Declarations**

52  
53 The study protocol has been approved by the ethic committee of the German Society for Nursing  
54 Science (21-037) and is registered in the German Clinical Trials Register (ID: DRKS0002599).  
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### 60 **Conflict of interest**

ES, BH, and MB are employees of Electronic Caregiver, Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States

## Figure legend

Figure 1 Addison Care functions in German version (Reproduced with permission from <https://electroniccaregiver.com>)

Figure 2 Study flow, phenomenon of interest, instruments, data sets, and settings

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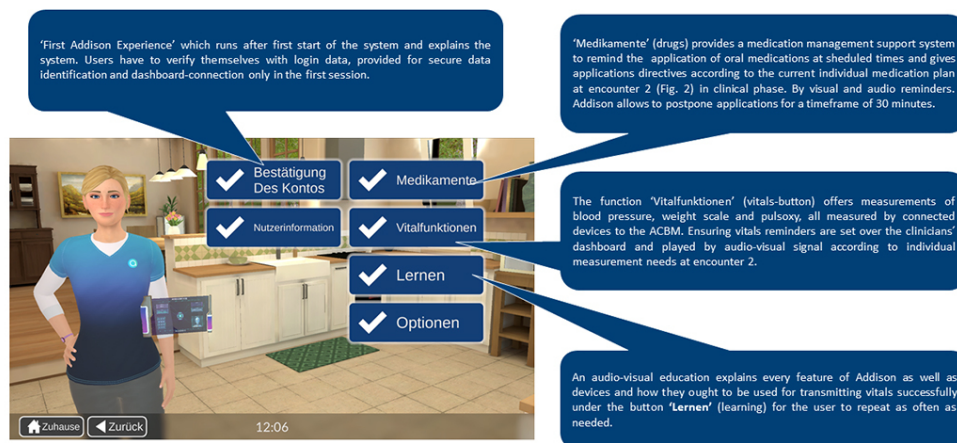
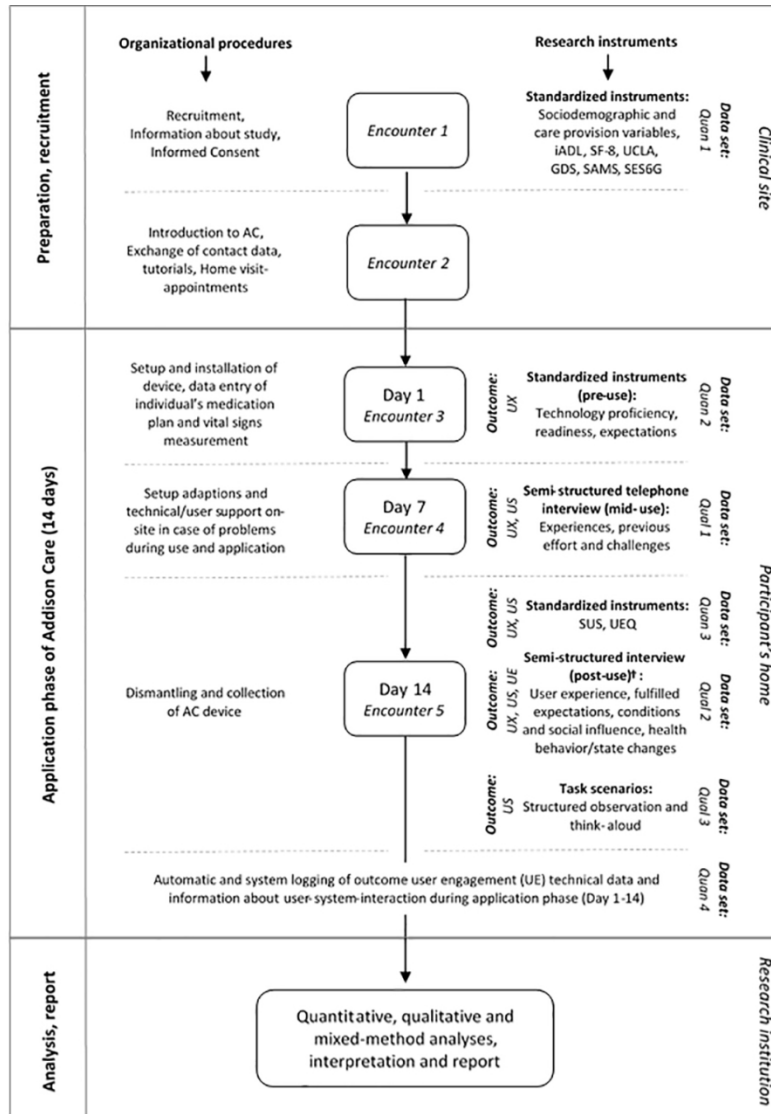


Figure 1: Addison Care functions in German version (Figure 1 reproduced with permission from <https://electroniccaregiver.com>)

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Notes: \* In case of the presence of relatives: semi-structured interview with relatives about their impressions and experiences towards AC; AC Addison Care, GDS Geriatric Depression Scale, iADL Instrumental Activities of Daily Living Scale, SAMS Stendal Adherence with Medication Score, SESGG Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Disease 6-item Scale, SF-8 Health Related Quality of Life Short-Form-8-Questionnaire, SUS System Usability Scale, UCLA University of California Los Angeles Loneliness Scale, UE User Engagement, UEQ User Experience Questionnaire, US Usability, UX User Experience

Figure 2: Study flow, phenomenon of interest, instruments, data sets, and settings

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## Supplement 1: SPIRIT Checklist



STANDARD PROTOCOL ITEMS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONAL TRIALS

SPIRIT 2013 Checklist: Recommended items to address in a clinical trial protocol and related documents\*

Section/item	Item No	Description	Protocol adherence: addressed on page number
<b>Administrative information</b>			
Title	1	Descriptive title identifying the study design, population, interventions, and, if applicable, trial acronym	Y:01
Trial registration	2a	Trial identifier and registry name. If not yet registered, name of intended registry	Y:02
	2b	All items from the World Health Organization Trial Registration Data Set	Y
Protocol version	3	Date and version identifier	NA
Funding	4	Sources and types of financial, material, and other support	Y:16
Roles and responsibilities	5a	Names, affiliations, and roles of protocol contributors	Y:01, 16
	5b	Name and contact information for the trial sponsor	Y:16
	5c	Role of study sponsor and funders, if any, in study design; collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of data; writing of the report; and the decision to submit the report for publication, including whether they will have ultimate authority over any of these activities	Y:16
	5d	Composition, roles, and responsibilities of the coordinating centre, steering committee, endpoint adjudication committee, data management team, and other individuals or groups overseeing the trial, if applicable (see Item 21a for data monitoring committee)	Y:09, 13

**Introduction**

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2	Background and rationale	6a	Description of research question and justification for undertaking the trial, including summary of relevant studies (published and unpublished) examining benefits and harms for each intervention	Y:03-06, 08
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7		6b	Explanation for choice of comparators	NA
8	Objectives	7	Specific objectives or hypotheses	Y:08
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10	Trial design	8	Description of trial design including type of trial (eg, parallel group, crossover, factorial, single group), allocation ratio, and framework (eg, superiority, equivalence, noninferiority, exploratory)	Y:08
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17	<b>Methods: Participants, interventions, and outcomes</b>			
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19	Study setting	9	Description of study settings (eg, community clinic, academic hospital) and list of countries where data will be collected. Reference to where list of study sites can be obtained	Y:09, Figure 2
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21				
22	Eligibility criteria	10	Inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants. If applicable, eligibility criteria for study centres and individuals who will perform the interventions (eg, surgeons, psychotherapists)	Y:09
23				
24				
25	Interventions	11a	Interventions for each group with sufficient detail to allow replication, including how and when they will be administered	Y:07-08, Figure 2
26				
27		11b	Criteria for discontinuing or modifying allocated interventions for a given trial participant (eg, drug dose change in response to harms, participant request, or improving/worsening disease)	Y:13
28				
29				
30	Outcomes	11c	Strategies to improve adherence to intervention protocols, and any procedures for monitoring adherence (eg, drug tablet return, laboratory tests)	Y:09-11, Figure 2
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32		11d	Relevant concomitant care and interventions that are permitted or prohibited during the trial	NA
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2	Participant	13	Time schedule of enrolment, interventions (including any	Y:09, Figure
3	timeline		run-ins and washouts), assessments, and visits for	2
4			participants. A schematic diagram is highly	
5			recommended (see Figure)	
6				
7	Sample size	14	Estimated number of participants needed to achieve	Y:09
8			study objectives and how it was determined, including	
9			clinical and statistical assumptions supporting any	
10			sample size calculations	
11				
12				
13	Recruitment	15	Strategies for achieving adequate participant enrolment	Y:09
14			to reach target sample size	
15				

### Methods: Assignment of interventions (for controlled trials)

#### Allocation:

16				
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19				
20	Sequence	16a	Method of generating the allocation sequence (eg,	NA
21	generation		computer-generated random numbers), and list of any	
22			factors for stratification. To reduce predictability of a	
23			random sequence, details of any planned restriction (eg,	
24			blocking) should be provided in a separate document that	
25			is unavailable to those who enrol participants or assign	
26			interventions	
27				
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29				
30	Allocation	16b	Mechanism of implementing the allocation sequence (eg,	NA
31	concealment		central telephone; sequentially numbered, opaque,	
32	mechanism		sealed envelopes), describing any steps to conceal the	
33			sequence until interventions are assigned	
34				
35				
36	Implementation	16c	Who will generate the allocation sequence, who will enrol	NA
37			participants, and who will assign participants to	
38			interventions	
39				
40	Blinding	17a	Who will be blinded after assignment to interventions (eg,	NA
41	(masking)		trial participants, care providers, outcome assessors,	
42			data analysts), and how	
43				
44				
45		17b	If blinded, circumstances under which unblinding is	NA
46			permissible, and procedure for revealing a participant's	
47			allocated intervention during the trial	
48				

### Methods: Data collection, management, and analysis

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51	Data collection	18a	Plans for assessment and collection of outcome,	Y:10-13
52	methods		baseline, and other trial data, including any related	
53			processes to promote data quality (eg, duplicate	
54			measurements, training of assessors) and a description	
55			of study instruments (eg, questionnaires, laboratory	
56			tests) along with their reliability and validity, if known.	
57			Reference to where data collection forms can be found, if	
58			not in the protocol	
59				
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1				
2		18b	Plans to promote participant retention and complete	Y
3			follow-up, including list of any outcome data to be	
4			collected for participants who discontinue or deviate from	
5			intervention protocols	
6				
7	Data	19	Plans for data entry, coding, security, and storage,	Y: 12-13
8	management		including any related processes to promote data quality	
9			(eg, double data entry; range checks for data values).	
10			Reference to where details of data management	
11			procedures can be found, if not in the protocol	
12				
13				
14	Statistical	20a	Statistical methods for analysing primary and secondary	Y: 14-15
15	methods		outcomes. Reference to where other details of the	
16			statistical analysis plan can be found, if not in the	
17			protocol	
18				
19				
20		20b	Methods for any additional analyses (eg, subgroup and	X
21			adjusted analyses)	
22				
23		20c	Definition of analysis population relating to protocol non-	X
24			adherence (eg, as randomised analysis), and any	
25			statistical methods to handle missing data (eg, multiple	
26			imputation)	
27				
28				
29	<b>Methods: Monitoring</b>			
30				
31	Data monitoring	21a	Composition of data monitoring committee (DMC);	X
32			summary of its role and reporting structure; statement of	
33			whether it is independent from the sponsor and	
34			competing interests; and reference to where further	
35			details about its charter can be found, if not in the	
36			protocol. Alternatively, an explanation of why a DMC is	
37			not needed	
38				
39				
40		21b	Description of any interim analyses and stopping	Y: 13
41			guidelines, including who will have access to these	
42			interim results and make the final decision to terminate	
43			the trial	
44				
45				
46	Harms	22	Plans for collecting, assessing, reporting, and managing	Y: 13
47			solicited and spontaneously reported adverse events and	
48			other unintended effects of trial interventions or trial	
49			conduct	
50				
51				
52	Auditing	23	Frequency and procedures for auditing trial conduct, if	X
53			any, and whether the process will be independent from	
54			investigators and the sponsor	
55				
56				
57	<b>Ethics and dissemination</b>			
58				
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1				
2	Research ethics approval	24	Plans for seeking research ethics committee/institutional review board (REC/IRB) approval	Y: 14
3				
4				
5	Protocol amendments	25	Plans for communicating important protocol modifications (eg, changes to eligibility criteria, outcomes, analyses) to relevant parties (eg, investigators, REC/IRBs, trial participants, trial registries, journals, regulators)	Y: 14
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8				
9				
10	Consent or assent	26a	Who will obtain informed consent or assent from potential trial participants or authorised surrogates, and how (see Item 32)	Y: 09
11				
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14				
15		26b	Additional consent provisions for collection and use of participant data and biological specimens in ancillary studies, if applicable	NA
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18				
19	Confidentiality	27	How personal information about potential and enrolled participants will be collected, shared, and maintained in order to protect confidentiality before, during, and after the trial	Y: 13-15
20				
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24				
25	Declaration of interests	28	Financial and other competing interests for principal investigators for the overall trial and each study site	Y: 16
26				
27				
28	Access to data	29	Statement of who will have access to the final trial dataset, and disclosure of contractual agreements that limit such access for investigators	NA
29				
30				
31				
32				
33	Ancillary and post-trial care	30	Provisions, if any, for ancillary and post-trial care, and for compensation to those who suffer harm from trial participation	NA
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35				
36				
37	Dissemination policy	31a	Plans for investigators and sponsor to communicate trial results to participants, healthcare professionals, the public, and other relevant groups (eg, via publication, reporting in results databases, or other data sharing arrangements), including any publication restrictions	Y: 15
38				
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44		31b	Authorship eligibility guidelines and any intended use of professional writers	NA
45				
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48		31c	Plans, if any, for granting public access to the full protocol, participant-level dataset, and statistical code	X
49				
50				
51	<b>Appendices</b>			
52				
53	Informed consent materials	32	Model consent form and other related documentation given to participants and authorised surrogates	X
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2 Biological 33 Plans for collection, laboratory evaluation, and storage of NA  
3 specimens biological specimens for genetic or molecular analysis in  
4 the current trial and for future use in ancillary studies, if  
5 applicable  
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For peer review only

## 1. Informed Consent

### Patient Consent Form

Name of patient in block letters: .....

Date of birth: .....

I agree to participate in the patient survey and use of the digital support platform "Addison Care" in the project PiloTT-A: Piloting of the virtual telecare technology "Addison".

I have been informed that I can decline to participate without any adverse consequences, especially regarding my medical care.

The Paracelsus Medical Private University Salzburg (Austria) is responsible for conducting the survey in the context of using "Addison Care" as a digital support service for medical care needs.

I have been informed by Mr./Mrs. .... in a detailed conversation about the nature, type, scope and significance of the survey, as well as the aims of using the Addison Care platform, and have received a copy of this consent form.

It has been explained to me for what purpose, to what extent, on what legal basis and for how long my data from the survey will be stored and what rights I have towards the responsible party with regard to my personal data. I have received a corresponding data protection declaration as well as an information letter.

Furthermore, I agree that the clinic's physicians will hand over my current list of medications to a member of the project team.

In addition, I have been informed that by using the Addison Care platform, my usage behavior of this technology will be transmitted to the Paracelsus Medical Private University, based on data known to me.

Furthermore, I have read the text of this patient information and consent form, which comprises a total of 9 pages. I have had sufficient time to decide. I have no further questions at this time.

**I am aware that my participation in the project is voluntary and that I can revoke it at any time without giving reasons and without personal disadvantage for further medical and nursing treatment. In this case, the collected data will be completely deleted and I will be informed about it.**

I declare that I am willing to participate in the research project and consent to the associated processing of my personal data and the usage data of the Addison Care platform, which are known to me.

I consent to the processing of my data collected as part of this clinical trial and as described in the "Data Protection" section of this document.



1  
2  
3 Insofar as special personal data within the meaning of Art. 9 DSGVO, such as health data, are  
4 collected, my consent also relates to this information.  
5

6 **I hereby declare my voluntary participation in the survey.**  
7

8 I consent that any personal information I provide for the survey may be stored and scientifically  
9 processed by the Paracelsus Medical Private University Salzburg.  
10

11 My personal information will only be used for this research project. Once the survey has been  
12 completed, it will no longer be possible to make any further link to me as a person.  
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18 Date

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Patient's signature

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24 \_\_\_\_\_  
25  
26 Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Surname, first name of the informing staff member

Ethikkommission der DGP • Stockumer Straße 12 • 58453 Witten

Paracelsus Medizinische Privatuniversität  
Herrn Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Jürgen Osterbrink  
Vorstand des Instituts für Pflegewissenschaft und -praxis  
Strubergasse 21  
A - 5020 Salzburg



Deutsche Gesellschaft für Pflegewissenschaft  
(DGP) e. V.  
Geschäftsstelle  
Bürgerstr. 47  
47057 Duisburg

Telefon: 0203 – 356793  
info@dg-pflegewissenschaft.de

Ethikkommission der Deutschen Gesellschaft  
für Pflegewissenschaft  
(DGP) e.V.  
Vorsitz Prof. Dr. Sabine Bartholomeyczik  
Stockumer Str. 12  
58453 Witten

[Ethikkommission@dg-pflegewissenschaft.de](mailto:Ethikkommission@dg-pflegewissenschaft.de)

Your proposal no. 21-037 to the ethical review committee of the German Society of Nursing Science (EK-DGP)

Dear Mr. Osterbrink,

the EK-DGP discussed and evaluated your proposal

*A pilot study of Addison Care, the Virtual Telecare Technology, - PiloTT-A (application no. 21-037)*  
submitted 2021-11-16.

The committee decided to give you an ethical approval.

Good luck for the project!

2021-12-27

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sabine Bartholomeyczik', is placed above the typed name of the chairperson.

Prof. Dr. Sabine Bartholomeyczik  
Chairperson EK-DGP

# BMJ Open

## Piloting of the virtual telecare technology 'Addison Care' to promote self-management in persons with chronic diseases in a community setting: protocol for a mixed methods user experience, user engagement and usability pilot study

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Date Submitted by the Author:	22-Aug-2022
Complete List of Authors:	Krutter, Simon; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Schuessler, Nadine; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Kutschar, Patrick; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Šabić, Edin; New Mexico State University, Department of Psychology; Electronic Caregiver Inc Dellinger, Johanna; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Klausner, Tabea; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Nestler, Nadja; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Beasley, Morgan; Electronic Caregiver Inc Henderson, Bailey; Electronic Caregiver Inc Pitzer, Stefan; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Mitterlehner, Barbara; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Langegger, Doris; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Winkler, Anna; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Kloesch, Michael; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice EBl-Maurer, Roland; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice van der Zee-Neuen, Antje; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice Osterbrink, Jürgen; Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, Institute of Nursing Science and Practice; University of North Florida, Brooks College of Health
<b>Primary Subject Heading</b>:	Nursing
Secondary Subject Heading:	Health services research

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Keywords:	PRIMARY CARE, PREVENTIVE MEDICINE, GERIATRIC MEDICINE

SCHOLARONE™  
Manuscripts

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3 **Piloting of the virtual telecare technology ‘Addison Care’ to promote self-management in persons**  
4 **with chronic diseases in a community setting: protocol for a mixed methods user experience, user**  
5 **engagement and usability pilot study**  
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10  
11 **Authors:** Simon Krutter<sup>1</sup>, Nadine Schuessler<sup>1</sup>, Patrick Kutschar<sup>1</sup>, Edin Šabić<sup>2,3</sup>, Johanna Dellinger<sup>1</sup>,  
12  
13 Tabea Klausner<sup>1</sup>, Nadja Nestler<sup>1</sup>, Morgan Beasley<sup>3</sup>, Bailey Henderson<sup>3</sup>, Stefan Pitzer<sup>1</sup>, Barbara  
14  
15 Mitterlehner<sup>1</sup>, Doris Langeegger<sup>1</sup>, Anna Winkler<sup>1</sup>, Michael Kloesch<sup>1</sup>, Roland Eßl-Maurer<sup>1</sup>, Antje van der  
16  
17 Zee-Neuen<sup>1</sup>, Jürgen Osterbrink<sup>1,4</sup>  
18  
19

20  
21 **Affiliations**  
22

23  
24 <sup>1</sup> Institute of Nursing Science and Practice, Paracelsus Medical University, Salzburg, Austria  
25

26 <sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States  
27

28 <sup>3</sup> Electronic Caregiver Inc., Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States  
29

30 <sup>4</sup> Brooks College of Health, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida, United States  
31  
32

33 **Corresponding Author Information**  
34

35  
36 Simon Krutter  
37

38  
39 Institute of Nursing Science and Practice, Paracelsus Medical University, Salzburg, Austria  
40

41  
42 Strubergasse 21, 5020 Salzburg, Austria  
43

44  
45 Email: [simon.krutter@pmu.ac.at](mailto:simon.krutter@pmu.ac.at)  
46

47  
48 Phone: +43 662 2024 80341  
49

50  
51 ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5788-9574  
52  
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54  
55 **Word Count:** 4.148  
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57  
58 **ABSTRACT** (293 words)  
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3 **Introduction:** Chronic diseases in older adults are one of the major epidemiological challenges of  
4 current times and leading cause of disability, poor quality of life, high health care costs, and death.  
5  
6 Self-management of chronic diseases is essential to improve health behaviors and health outcomes.  
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9  
10 Technology-assisted interventions have shown to improve self-management of chronic diseases.  
11  
12 Virtual avatars can be a key factor for the acceptance of these technologies. Addison Care is a home-  
13 based telecare solution equipped with a virtual avatar named Addison, connecting older persons with  
14 their caregivers via an easy-to-use technology. A central advantage is that Addison care provides access  
15 to self-management support for an up-to-now highly underrepresented population - older persons  
16 with chronic disease(s), which enables them to profit from e-health in everyday life.  
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24 **Methods and analysis:** A pragmatic, non-randomized, one-arm pilot study applying an embedded  
25 mixed-methods approach will be conducted to examine user experience, usability, and user  
26 engagement of the virtual avatar Addison. Participants will be at least 65 years old and will be recruited  
27 between September 2022 and November 2022 from hospitals during the discharge process to home  
28 care. Standardized instruments, namely the User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ), System Usability  
29 Scale (SUS), Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (iADL) scale, Short-Form-8-Questionnaire (SF-8),  
30 UCLA Loneliness Scale, Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS), Stendal Adherence with Medication Score  
31 (SAMS) and Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Diseases Scale (SESG6), as well as survey-based  
32 assessments, semi-structured interviews and think-aloud protocols will be used. The study seeks to  
33 enroll 20 patients that meet the criteria.  
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48 **Ethics and dissemination:** The study protocol has been approved by the ethic committee of the  
49 German Society for Nursing Science (21-037). The results are intended to be published in peer-  
50 reviewed journals and disseminated through conference papers.  
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55 **Trial registration number:** German Clinical Trials Register (ID: DRKS00025992).  
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3 **Keywords:** Telecare, virtual avatar, older people, chronic disease self-management, pilot study, user  
4  
5 experience, e-health;  
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#### 8 9 **STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

- 10  
11  
12 - This pilot study provides an opportunity to explore the acceptability of and experiences with  
13 a potentially beneficial e-health technology in the underrepresented population of  
14 chronically ill older persons in a telecare setting.  
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18 - The mixed-methods study design will provide a deep and broad insight on usability, user  
19 experience and user engagement of Addison care as a German-speaking, culturally adapted  
20 virtual avatar.  
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24 - This investigation evaluates the efficacy of a sophisticated virtual avatar, Addison, in assisting  
25 with many crucial health management tasks – including medication management and health  
26 vitals monitoring.  
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32 - A focus on barriers to user-engagement for those who are technologically hesitant will  
33 provide rich information concerning how best to design virtual avatars and e-health  
34 technologies to match user needs and mental models.  
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38 - The primary limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size due to our selective  
39 inclusion criteria, which may diminish the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of our sample.  
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#### 47 **BACKGROUND**

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49 Societies across the globe are facing a significant shift in age demographics whereby older adults are  
50 becoming an increasingly larger group within their population. This phenomenon is one of the most  
51 salient economic, social, and medical issues of current times.[1] Aging increases both the risk for most  
52 chronic diseases and for multimorbidity. Between 34% and 61% of older adults are multimorbid [2],  
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3 which can have consequences such as disability and functional decline, poor quality of life, social  
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5 isolation, depression, and high health care costs.[3, 4]  
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8 Patients themselves have an integral role in the management of their chronic disease.[5] Factors that  
9  
10 influence effective self-management of chronic disease include: experience, skill, motivation, culture,  
11  
12 confidence, habits, physical and mental function, social support, and access to care.[6]  
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16 Self-management of chronic diseases is defined as the response to signs and symptoms when they  
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18 occur, with the goal that patients play an active role in optimising health outcomes and minimizing the  
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20 impact of their conditions.[6] Self-management support refers to patient, healthcare professional, and  
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22 healthcare system interventions aimed to improve self-management behaviours.[7] Self-monitoring  
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24 vitals [8] and medication adherence have been recognized as two of the most essential self-  
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26 management activities performed by patients to promote their health.[9]  
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30 Although interventions designed to promote self-management in chronic diseases have traditionally  
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32 been offered in-person, delivering these interventions remotely utilizing available technology (e.g.,  
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34 mobile smart phones, Internet, interactive voice response, telephone, virtual reality) has become more  
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36 prevalent.[10] These technology-assisted interventions have shown to improve self-management and  
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38 health status.[11, 12]  
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42 Digital information technologies support people with care requirements to maintain their  
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44 independence, improve quality of life, increase health literacy and aid caregivers in their duties.[13,  
45  
46 14] Telehealth is one of the fastest-growing sectors in health care. The term refers to a broad array of  
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48 provider-to-patient communication and has been defined as using telecommunications, information  
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50 technologies, and devices to share information and to provide clinical, population health, and  
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52 administrative services at a distance.[15] Remote patient monitoring is a widely used telehealth  
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54 intervention that can effectively support self-management in patients with chronic diseases.[7]  
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### 58 **Remote Patient Monitoring**

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3 Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) is a promising solution for facilitating the patient-physician  
4 relationship while addressing the shortage of healthcare workers today.  
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8 Studies concerning the efficacy of RPM has spanned the topics of post-operative rehospitalization,  
9 chronic disease management, medication adherence, and quality of life and has shown promising  
10 results.[16-20] However, RPM technology can only benefit patients who choose to actively interact  
11 with the devices. As compared to younger users, elderly users also face unique challenges that are a  
12 direct result of aging – such as declines in dexterity, hearing, and vision. As a result, researchers have  
13 identified that improving ease of navigation for task completion, ensuring appropriate size and color  
14 of font, and properly configuring the size of the hardware itself are paramount in addressing  
15 technological hesitancy.[21]  
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### 26 27 **Virtual Avatars**

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30 Graphic user interfaces, which can improve the user experience and personalize the experience for the  
31 user through virtual avatars, have begun to be incorporated into RPM systems. Virtual avatars are an  
32 emerging feature in RPM that has shown propitious results in terms of user engagement, health  
33 education, and self-care behavior.[22]  
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40 One important factor in the receptiveness of patients to virtual avatars is the avatar's appearance. Bott  
41 [23] investigated the impact of a virtual pet avatar to deliver surveys to older clients. They found that  
42 those who interacted with the avatar experienced lower rates of delirium, fewer falls, and decreased  
43 loneliness. However, research has generally shown that anthropomorphic characteristics are often  
44 preferable for virtual healthcare avatars [24] – as well as similarities in appearance between the avatar  
45 and the user.[25] Previous literature has revealed that when designing virtual agents for older persons,  
46 key factors related to acceptance of technology include conversational latency, gamification, and  
47 artificially intelligent lexicon.[26]  
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### 58 **User experience and technology acceptance among older persons**

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3 Understanding how older adults perceive technology and virtual avatars may lead to improvements in  
4 the accessibility, acceptability, and adoption of virtual avatars among older persons with chronic  
5 diseases. This can be accomplished through user experience (UX) research, wherein the overall  
6 experience of the user is assessed through measures related to usability, user engagement, usefulness,  
7 function, credibility, and satisfaction with the technology.[27] While behavior, cognition, and affect  
8 are important defining components of user engagement [28], learnability, efficiency, memorability,  
9 few errors and satisfaction are defining components of usability.[29] UX is based upon User-Centered  
10 Design (UCD), wherein the needs and characteristics of the end user become the focus of technology  
11 design and development, with the intention of higher acceptance and fewer user errors.[30]

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24 Theories that predict and explain health technology acceptance and use can help to tailor the  
25 technology to specific patient needs. One of the more recent models, the Unified Theory of Acceptance  
26 and Use of Technology (UTAUT) [31], posits that a person's intent to use [acceptance of technology]  
27 and usage behavior (actual use) of a technology is predicated by the patient's performance and effort  
28 expectancy of the technology. The UTAUT also suggests social influence and facilitating conditions as  
29 determinants of behavioral intention to use the technology.[31, 32] Most older persons are  
30 significantly less adept at technology use than the general population, with technology anxiety being  
31 a major influence on older users' intent to use technologies.[33] However, older adults are interested  
32 in integrating new technologies into their healthcare.[34] Studies confirm the applicability of the  
33 UTAUT in the context of Telecare services among older persons.[35]

#### 46 47 **Intervention: Addison Care Tablet Personal Computer (PC)**

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50 The present research pilots an intervention provided by Addison Care [36], which is an innovative  
51 home-bound connected virtual RPM platform for individuals living with chronic disease. A 3D-  
52 animated nurse named 'Addison' is the center of interaction between the system and its users,  
53 personifying the telehealth experience for the user. The pilot study encompasses two health-related  
54 functions of Addison Care: 'Addison' supporting the user in self-monitoring relevant vitals (blood  
55  
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3 pressure, weight, pulse and oxygen saturation) as well as medication schedule adherence. This is  
4  
5 achieved by offering reminder and monitoring functionalities (see Fig. 1).  
6  
7

8 [Figure 1 about here]  
9

10  
11 The Addison Care hardware consists of a tablet PC with a speaker, a microphone module, and a touch  
12  
13 screen (see Figure 1). The tablet connects with Bluetooth vitals measuring devices and can be installed  
14  
15 in a user's home. Avatar technology combined with natural language understanding and automatic  
16  
17 speech recognition provides users with effective natural interaction with the assisting technology.[22,  
18  
19 26] Subtitles, vital signs, and medications are graphically illustrated on the Addison Care interface for  
20  
21 clear communication between the virtual agent and the user.  
22  
23

24  
25 The Addison Tablet PC is connected to a web-based dashboard that allows access to user data,  
26  
27 including vitals measurements and medication reminders. For the pilot study, medication plans,  
28  
29 reminder-options, and contact information are managed by members of the study team, who also act  
30  
31 as a support team for the technical set-up and in case of technical problems. The intervention in this  
32  
33 study involves voice-driven audio-centered interaction between Addison and users in German, as well  
34  
35 as the implementation of a German touch screen interface. Introduction of Addison Care to German  
36  
37 users requires adaption of the original technology to ensure a good cultural fit. Adaptations were made  
38  
39 to the surroundings of the avatar, as well as to Addison's mannerisms. Additionally, changes were  
40  
41 made to the system to ensure a good fit between system and real life in terms of interactive elements  
42  
43 [from basics ensuring appropriate data and time formats to more complex elements like making sure  
44  
45 the avatar interacts in a culturally appropriate manner with the user). Voice and touch interaction  
46  
47 modes are currently adapted from English into German. All piloted features of Addison Care are shown  
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51  
52 in Fig. 1.  
53

## 54 **Objectives**

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3 While other studies have provided insight into the potential of digital health technology and virtual  
4 avatars, the vast majority have been tested within laboratory settings, where older adults were unable  
5 to interact with the technology in a natural environment. Additionally, the digital health systems and  
6 virtual avatars were not culturally adapted after development.  
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12 The study aims to explore the feasibility, acceptability, experience, engagement, and usability of the  
13 culturally tailored health technology and the virtual avatar Addison for self-management for older  
14 patients with chronic diseases in their own home.  
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## 19 20 21 **METHODS AND ANALYSIS**

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24 A pragmatic, non-randomized, one-arm pilot study applying an embedded mixed-methods approach  
25 will be conducted to examine the primary outcomes 'user experience', 'usability', and 'user  
26 engagement' of the virtual avatar Addison three times within the use span. 'Embedded' refers to the  
27 integration of qualitative methods into a quantitative methodology framework, or vice versa, to  
28 provide enriched insights or understanding into the phenomena of interest.[31, 37] The study design  
29 is pluralistic, problem-centered, real-world applicable, and focused on the consequences of actions,  
30 stemming from pragmatism as a research paradigm.[37] The present protocol followed the SPIRIT  
31 guidelines (see Supplementary 1).[38] Data collection will take place between September 2022 and  
32 November 2022.  
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### 45 46 **Recruitment criteria and process**

47  
48 Eligible patients will be identified by medical specialists in in German hospitals. The inclusion criteria  
49 are as follows:  
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51

- 52 - Planned patients transition from hospital to extramural care
  - 53 - Three to nine drugs (regular intake of drugs, no status of hypermedication)
  - 54 - 65 years or older with a chronic health condition
  - 55 - Ability to speak and understand German language
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3 The exclusion criteria are:  
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- 5  
6 - Ten or more drugs per day  
7  
8 - Younger than 65 years old  
9  
10 - Moderate to severe cognitive impairment or severe psychiatric disorders  
11  
12

13  
14 Provided that these criteria are met and general interest in using health technology is expressed,  
15  
16 information about the pilot study and the intervention will be shared. If a patient declares the will to  
17  
18 participate, a meeting with the support team will be arranged while the patient is still at the hospital.  
19  
20 Potential participants will be informed of all aspects of the study through verbal instruction and written  
21  
22 materials (Figure 2, Encounter 1). After written informed consent (see Supplementary 2) is provided,  
23  
24 living situation and socio-demographic data will be assessed by research assistants.  
25  
26

### 27 28 **Setting and sample size** 29

30  
31 Addison Care will be piloted in participants' homes, located in a community setting, after their  
32  
33 discharge from hospital for two consecutive weeks. In Encounter 2 (see Figure 2) within 1 day after the  
34  
35 informed consent is provided, the support team will give first instructions on Addison Care while the  
36  
37 participant is still hospitalized. First adjustments of reminder, medication plan, and vital measurements  
38  
39 will be provisioned for the use of Addison Tablet PC at home. This study seeks to enroll 20 patients.  
40  
41 The sample size is an adequate number to evaluate study feasibility, test the study procedures and  
42  
43 explore the user experience.[39, 40]  
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### 48 **Patient and public involvement** 49

50  
51 In advance of the pilot study, older adults assisted in the development of the data collection materials  
52  
53 and pre-testing of Addison Care. However, patients and the public were not involved in the  
54  
55 development of the research question, outcome measures and the design of the study.  
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### 58 **Outcomes, Instruments, and Variables** 59 60

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2  
3 Building upon the theoretical concepts of technology acceptance (UTAUT), we will assess user  
4 experience, usability, and user engagement (primary outcomes), as well as participant background  
5 information (e.g., sociodemographic, care provision) and health status-associated phenomena  
6  
7 (functional status, quality of life and wellbeing, loneliness, depression, medication adherence, and self-  
8 management) using standardized, quantitative and semi-standardized qualitative research  
9 instruments (see Figure 2).  
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### 16 17 **Standardized research instruments**

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19  
20 *User experience.* The German version of the User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ) [41] will be used to  
21 assess user experience. The UEQ consists of 26 items along six scales: attractiveness (6 items,  
22 Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha=0.89$ ), perspicuity (4 items,  $\alpha=0.82$ ), efficiency (4 items,  $\alpha=0.73$ ), dependability (4  
23 items,  $\alpha=0.65$ ), stimulation (4 items,  $\alpha=0.76$ ), and novelty (4 items,  $\alpha=0.83$ ).[41, 42] Each item  
24 represents a 7-point rating scale (-3 most negative rating, +3 most positive rating) of properties that  
25 the product under study may have. An average score is computed for each scale.  
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35 *Usability.* To assess the usability of Addison Care, the validated German version of the System Usability  
36 Scale (SUS) will be applied.[43] The SUS [44] consists of 10 items and is a standardized, generic  
37 instrument for assessing the usability of technical applications, mobile applications, or devices. Internal  
38 consistency has been reported to range between  $\alpha=0.70$  to 0.95.[45] The SUS consists of 10 items,  
39 each with five-point rating scales (1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree). The standardized scoring of  
40 the SUS results in a total score between 0 to 100 points using a given norm-based scoring  
41 algorithm.[45]  
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51 *User engagement.* Automatic system and data logging information will be used to measure user  
52 engagement in terms of intensity and type of interactions between users and Addison Care. This non-  
53 participatory data collection, e.g., documenting data using automatically protocolled technical  
54 variables without having asked questions or the presence of an observer, will provide essential  
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3 information on the actual use, used functions, and user engagement with certain contents of the  
4  
5 product of interest.[46-48]  
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7  
8 *Functional status.* The German translation [49] of the Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (iADL) scale  
9  
10 [50] will be applied to assess patients' functional status in terms of activities of daily living. The iADL is  
11  
12 a standardized instrument that measures functionality related to eight domains of daily living. It has  
13  
14 reported reliability coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.91.[51] Each domain is measured using either  
15  
16 three or four ability levels with 0 or 1 point per domain, resulting in a summary score of 8 points at  
17  
18 maximum. Due to a strong reference of some items to household aspects, gender-specific scores will  
19  
20 be used, e.g., 0 (low function, dependent) to 8 (high function, independent) for women and 0 to 5 for  
21  
22 men, respectively.[51]  
23  
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25

26  
27 *Quality of life.* Health-related quality of life will be measured by the German version of the Short-Form-  
28  
29 8-Questionnaire (SF-8).[52] The SF-8 assesses the 8 dimensions physical functioning, role physical (role  
30  
31 limitations because of physical health), bodily pain, general health, vitality, social functioning, role  
32  
33 emotional (role limitations because of emotional problems), and mental health, by one item each, and  
34  
35 along two scales 'physical component summary score' and 'mental component summary score'. The  
36  
37 items comprise of five- or six-point response scales that verbalize the extent to which each dimension  
38  
39 is present. In addition to single-item analysis, the two summary scores will be measured using a given  
40  
41 norm-based scoring method. Next to an adequate test-retest reliability [52], an overall internal  
42  
43 consistency between  $\alpha=0.86$  and 0.92 have been reported.[53]  
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49 *Loneliness.* To assess participants' perception of social isolation and loneliness, the shortened, 3-item  
50  
51 German version [54, 55] of the UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) Loneliness Scale will be  
52  
53 applied. Each item exhibits a five-level response scale (very often, often, sometimes, rarely, never) and  
54  
55 will be analysed item-by-item. Cronbach's alpha for the 3-item loneliness scale was 0.72.[54]  
56  
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58  
59 *Depression.* The German translation [56] of the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) will be used to  
60  
evaluate the presence of depression.[57, 58] The 8-item version will be applied to make the survey as

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2  
3 time-efficient as possible.[59] Participants are asked about selected symptoms of depressive states  
4  
5 over the past week using a dichotomous response format (no vs. yes). The total sum score of the GDS-8  
6  
7 is 0-8 points. Internal consistency with  $\alpha > 0.80$  has been shown [59]. A recommended cut-off score of  
8  
9 GDS $\geq 3$  indicating relevant indications of depression will be applied.

11  
12  
13 *Medication adherence.* Participants' adherence to their medication regimen will be measured by the  
14  
15 Stendal Adherence with Medication Score (SAMS).[60] SAMS consists of 18 items on a five-level  
16  
17 response scale (0-4) assessing fully adherent to nonadherent medication behaviour per item.[61]  
18  
19 Responses are summarized into a cumulative point scale (0-72), which can be categorized as fully  
20  
21 adherent (0), moderately adherent (1-10), and not adherent (>10). An overall internal consistency of  
22  
23  $\alpha = 0.83$  has been reported.[61]

24  
25  
26  
27 *Self-management.* To assess participant's Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Diseases (SESG6), the  
28  
29 German version of the 6-item scale will be used.[62] The six items are rated with a 10-level Likert-type  
30  
31 scale (1 'not at all confident' to 10 'totally confident'). A mean score over at least four of the six items  
32  
33 will be calculated, thus allowing a maximum of two missing item responses. SESG6 has been attested  
34  
35 a high internal consistency measure of  $\alpha = 0.93$ . [62]

36  
37  
38  
39 *Technology proficiency, readiness, and expectations.* A standardized face-to-face interview prior to the  
40  
41 use of Addison Care ('pre-use interview') will be performed to collect information on participant  
42  
43 technology proficiency and readiness (7 items) in terms of experience with and use of general  
44  
45 information and communication technologies (3 items) as well as expectations regarding the upcoming  
46  
47 use of the Addison Care technology (6 items). These closed-ended questions were derived from  
48  
49 empirical and theoretical literature [31, 32, 63] and further adapted by the research team.

50  
51  
52  
53 *Sociodemographic and care provision variables.* Sociodemographic and care-relevant variables will be  
54  
55 collected by means of a short, standardized 9-item questionnaire. Age of participants, gender, living  
56  
57 situation, place of residence in terms of urbanization, care provision by relatives, and care provision  
58  
59 by ambulant/mobile care service will be assessed using closed-ended questions. Information on  
60



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3 documented primary diagnoses and existing additional chronic diseases will be collected using open-  
4 ended questions and categorized applying the 11th revision of the International Classification of  
5 Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11).[64]  
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### 10 **Semi-standardized research instruments**

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13 *First experiences and encountered technical obstacles.* A qualitative, semi-structured brief telephone  
14 interview ('mid-use interview') with users after one week of Addison interaction will be conducted.  
15 Information about users' experiences to date, as well as previous effort and encountered challenges  
16 in using the Addison Care technology will be collected. The user reports are to be recorded in an open-  
17 ended documentation sheet.  
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26 *User experience, fulfilled expectations, perceived enabling conditions for use and technology's social*  
27 *influence, and health behaviour.* A comprehensive qualitative, semi-structured, face-to-face interview  
28 will explore participants' perspectives with reference to the fulfilled expectations after the use of  
29 Addison Care ('post-use interview'), perceived enabling conditions, and social influence in the use of  
30 the technology, as well as the participant's experiences and adaptations of health behaviour. The  
31 interview guide questions on user experience are based on the respective literature on UX research  
32 [65], those on conditions and technology's social influence along the main factors of the UTAUT model  
33 [31, 32], and those on health behaviours were developed against the background of the Health Action  
34 Process Approach (HAPA).[66] The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. With reference  
35 to the embedded mixed-methods approach, the four most striking individual ratings of the previously  
36 collected standardized User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ) will be thematised and perceived changes  
37 in secondary outcomes (functional status, quality of life, loneliness, depression, medication  
38 adherence) will be assessed using open-ended questions. To address their perspectives on the use of  
39 Addison Care, an optional topical block of guided questions will be operationalized.  
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58 *Task performance scenario and think-aloud protocol.* Finally, to gain insight into user thoughts,  
59 decision-making processes, and how they experience the Addison Care technology, a structured  
60

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3 observation with an accompanying think-aloud protocol will be applied.[67] Participants will be asked  
4  
5 to perform a set of specific tasks with Addison Care while verbally expressing their immediate  
6  
7 thoughts, and explaining their reactions during system interaction. Task performance and participant  
8  
9 comments will be documented using a structured observation sheet.  
10  
11

12  
13 [Figure 2 about here]  
14  
15

### 16 **User safety and data management**

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18 During the two weeks study period, medical emergencies, acute deterioration in health or care needs,  
19  
20 patients' feelings of insecurity, or hospital admissions will constitute reasons to end the participation  
21  
22 early. Formal health services in the community setting will be informed about the use of Addison Care  
23  
24 by their clients. Informal caregivers of the participants will be educated about Addison Care and are  
25  
26 instructed to contact the support team in need of help (see Figure 2).  
27  
28  
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30  
31 Figure 2 provides detailed information on the different data retrieved during participants'  
32  
33 enrolment. Personal information of participants will be accessed by the support team only, who will  
34  
35 monitor the dashboard and assist with any user problems. Dashboard access is granted by login data  
36  
37 provided by Addison Care USA.  
38  
39

40  
41 All data retrieved empirically (see figure 2) will be saved on study-specific computers during data  
42  
43 collection and stored in password-protected folders on the support team storage after completed data  
44  
45 collection. User engagement data will be stored on Addison Tablet PC for short periods of time being  
46  
47 but regularly exported onto the server from the clinical dashboard and after the end of the pilot study  
48  
49 transferred to study-specific computers. All personal data will be stored at a server in Berlin in  
50  
51 Germany and encrypted. According to European Union General Data Protection Regulations,  
52  
53 participants have the right to view all stored data or choose to delete their data at any given time as  
54  
55 long as their data has not been anonymized by code yet.  
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### 59 **Analysis**

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3 Various data will be organized and triangulated in data sets Quan 1-4 and Qual 1-3 (see Figure 2) for  
4 analysis that fit the relevant phenomenon of interest. Final integration of overall results will take place  
5 upon conclusion of the study [37] and will be summarized with a joint display by using a mixed methods  
6 matrix.[68]  
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12 Participants` characteristics will be statistically described using information on socio-demographics,  
13 living and care provision, quality of life, health literacy, activities of daily living, and medication  
14 adherence (Quan 1, Figure 2).  
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21 A thematic content analysis of the qualitative data gained from interviews and observations in  
22 encounters 4 and 5 (see Figure 2) will be performed, expanding the deductively developed code by  
23 inductive inputs.[69] Deductive codes prepared from theoretical pre-considerations will include the  
24 concepts of user experience as well as usability. Coding strategy will separate the two phenomena  
25 during the coding process. User experience results will be produced by triangulating the results of the  
26 User Experience Questionnaire (Quan 3) as well as code system elements gathered in qualitative data  
27 sets (Qual 1, 2, 3). These three data sets will provide usability results after interviews are transcribed  
28 and coded. The codes will then be merged with the SUS results (Quan 3) to get a clear picture of  
29 obstacles and acceptance. User Engagement data will track usage events like logins, reminders, and  
30 overall Addison-user-interaction over the 2-week usage period - resulting in data set Quan 4 (see Figure  
31 2). To facilitate the subsequent main study, deductive codes for the area of a feasibility study are also  
32 included in the coding strategy.[70] All quantitative data will be analyzed using common descriptive  
33 statistics.  
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## 50 51 **Ethics and dissemination**

### 52 53 54 **Ethical considerations**

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57 This pilot study was approved by the ethics committee of the German Society for Nursing Science (21-  
58 037) to ensure that the research is done in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and in line with  
59  
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1  
2  
3 the current legislation authority (see Supplementary 3). The pilot study is registered in the German  
4  
5 Clinical Trials Register (ID: DRKS00025992).  
6  
7

## 8 **Dissemination**

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11 The results are intended to be published in peer-reviewed journals and disseminated through  
12  
13 conference papers.  
14  
15

## 16 **Overview**

17  
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19 This protocol presents research that assesses the feasibility, acceptability, experience, engagement,  
20  
21 and usability of Addison Care – a health technology and virtual avatar for older persons with chronic  
22  
23 diseases in their own home.  
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26  
27  
28 For this purpose, we culturally adopted the Addison Care technology and its functions (tutorial,  
29  
30 medication management, testing vital signs) to explore participants' acceptance and experiences of  
31  
32 the health technology and the virtual avatar.  
33  
34

35  
36 For older adults with chronic diseases, the overarching goal of self-management is to enhance their  
37  
38 quality of life and maintain independence, all while supporting formal and informal caregivers.  
39  
40

41  
42 The goal of this pilot study is to further our understanding of the potential issues and challenges that  
43  
44 will be used as the foundations for a larger randomized control study.  
45  
46

47  
48 One of the strengths of this study is the use of the health technology for a longer period of time and  
49  
50 with real patients in a natural setting. Another strength lies in the cultural adaption of the health  
51  
52 technology and its integration in a telecare framework. The integrated voice and touch interaction with  
53  
54 the avatar 'Addison' should also contribute to improve the human-computer interaction.  
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56

## 57 **Limitations**

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3 Possible limitations of the pilot study are the lack of results on usability or acceptance of the US  
4 American version of Addison Care that we can refer to. Cultural adaption and translation into German  
5 therefore might not be the only reason for a suboptimal user experience. Interviews allow to gain  
6 insight into this issue. The effectiveness of the extensive data collection process has to be proven as  
7 well as the recruitment process. The highly selective sample of the pilot study will diminish ethnical or  
8 socio-economic diversity which will be introduced thoroughly in the study following the pilot. Within  
9 the qualitative branch of the mixed-methods study we seek sufficient richness of data but do not  
10 expect to achieve a data saturation. The study's time line may be influenced by COVID-19 pandemic  
11 recruitment-wise as well as by pandemic regulations in Germany which cannot be foreseen at the  
12 current situation. Because we do not have an influence on the stability of the Internet connection, this  
13 could be another source of uncertainty. Finally, it is not the aim of the pilot study to show effects on  
14 the health status of the users. But the multiple instruments for testing health status-associated  
15 phenomena should provide adequacy to show such effects in a subsequent main study.

### Contributors

16  
17 SK, NaS, JD, PK, NN, JO, ES, SP, MB, MK, REM and BM participated in the design of the study protocol.  
18 SK, NaS, PK, JD, TK, and ES drafted the protocol manuscript. MB, BH, BM, SP, AW, DL, AvZ and JO  
19 critically revised and commented on its previous versions and the final version. All authors critically  
20 reviewed the manuscript and agreed on submission.

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21  
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23 Hospital Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany for access to the German version of the SESG6.

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24  
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### Declarations

1  
2  
3 The study protocol has been approved by the ethic committee of the German Society for Nursing  
4  
5 Science (21-037) and is registered in the German Clinical Trials Register (ID: DRKS0002599).  
6  
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### 8 **Conflict of interest**

9

10  
11 ES, BH, and MB are employees of Electronic Caregiver, Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States  
12  
13

### 14 **Figure legend**

15  
16  
17  
18 Figure 1 Addison Care functions in German version (Reproduced with permission from  
19  
20 <https://electroniccaregiver.com>)  
21  
22

23 Figure 2 Study flow, phenomenon of interest, instruments, data sets, and settings  
24  
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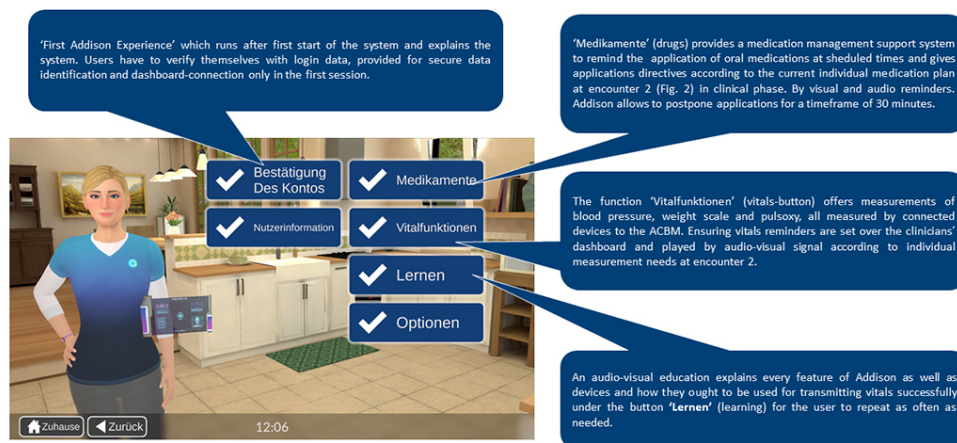
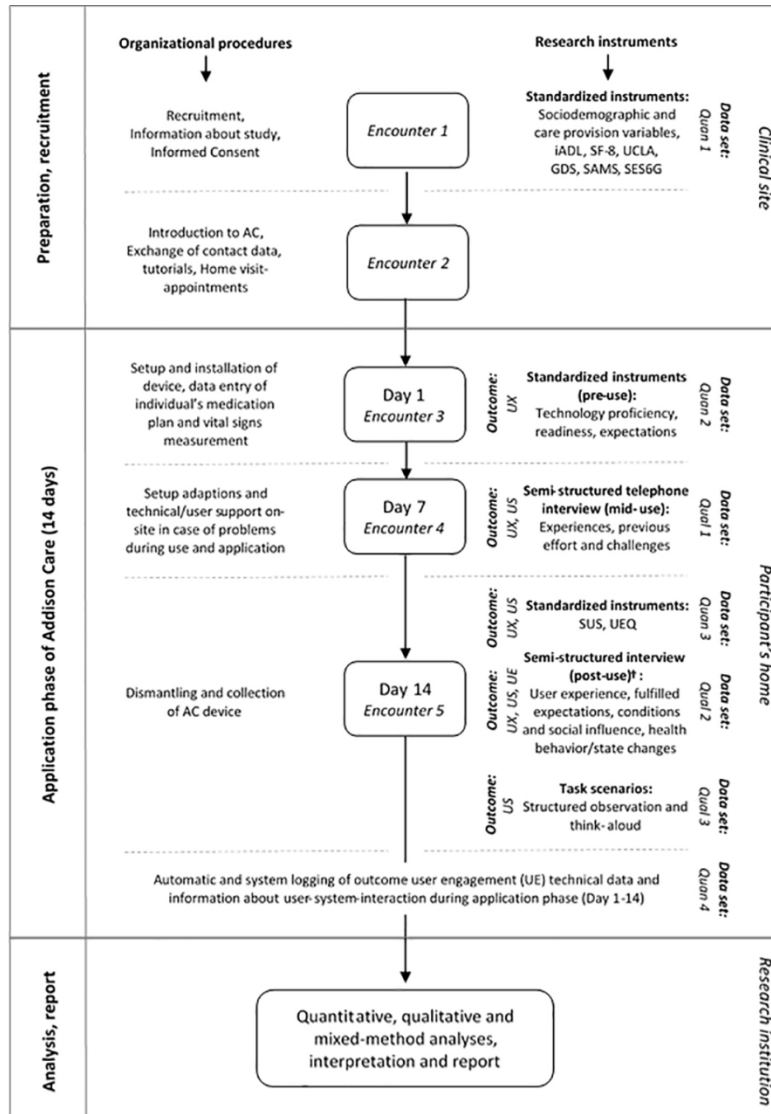


Figure 1: Addison Care functions in German version (Figure 1 reproduced with permission from <https://electroniccaregiver.com>)

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Notes: \* In case of the presence of relatives: semi-structured interview with relatives about their impressions and experiences towards AC; AC Addison Care, GDS Geriatric Depression Scale, iADL Instrumental Activities of Daily Living Scale, SAMS Stendal Adherence with Medication Score, SESGG Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Disease 6-item Scale, SF-8 Health Related Quality of Life Short-Form-8-Questionnaire, SUS System Usability Scale, UCLA University of California Los Angeles Loneliness Scale, UE User Engagement, UEQ User Experience Questionnaire, US Usability, UX User Experience

Figure 2: Study flow, phenomenon of interest, instruments, data sets, and settings

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## Supplement 1: SPIRIT Checklist



STANDARD PROTOCOL ITEMS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONAL TRIALS

SPIRIT 2013 Checklist: Recommended items to address in a clinical trial protocol and related documents\*

Section/item	Item No	Description	Protocol adherence: addressed on page number
<b>Administrative information</b>			
Title	1	Descriptive title identifying the study design, population, interventions, and, if applicable, trial acronym	Y:01
Trial registration	2a	Trial identifier and registry name. If not yet registered, name of intended registry	Y:02
	2b	All items from the World Health Organization Trial Registration Data Set	Y
Protocol version	3	Date and version identifier	NA
Funding	4	Sources and types of financial, material, and other support	Y:16
Roles and responsibilities	5a	Names, affiliations, and roles of protocol contributors	Y:01, 16
	5b	Name and contact information for the trial sponsor	Y:16
	5c	Role of study sponsor and funders, if any, in study design; collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of data; writing of the report; and the decision to submit the report for publication, including whether they will have ultimate authority over any of these activities	Y:16
	5d	Composition, roles, and responsibilities of the coordinating centre, steering committee, endpoint adjudication committee, data management team, and other individuals or groups overseeing the trial, if applicable (see Item 21a for data monitoring committee)	Y:09, 13

**Introduction**

1				
2	Background and	6a	Description of research question and justification for	Y:03-06, 08
3	rationale		undertaking the trial, including summary of relevant	
4			studies (published and unpublished) examining benefits	
5			and harms for each intervention	
6				
7		6b	Explanation for choice of comparators	NA
8				
9	Objectives	7	Specific objectives or hypotheses	Y:08
10				
11	Trial design	8	Description of trial design including type of trial (eg,	Y:08
12			parallel group, crossover, factorial, single group),	
13			allocation ratio, and framework (eg, superiority,	
14			equivalence, noninferiority, exploratory)	
15				
16				
17				
18	<b>Methods: Participants, interventions, and outcomes</b>			
19	Study setting	9	Description of study settings (eg, community clinic,	Y:09,
20			academic hospital) and list of countries where data will	Figure 2
21			be collected. Reference to where list of study sites can	
22			be obtained	
23				
24				
25	Eligibility criteria	10	Inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants. If	Y:09
26			applicable, eligibility criteria for study centres and	
27			individuals who will perform the interventions (eg,	
28			surgeons, psychotherapists)	
29				
30				
31	Interventions	11a	Interventions for each group with sufficient detail to allow	Y:07-08,
32			replication, including how and when they will be	Figure 2
33			administered	
34				
35		11b	Criteria for discontinuing or modifying allocated	Y:13
36			interventions for a given trial participant (eg, drug dose	
37			change in response to harms, participant request, or	
38			improving/worsening disease)	
39				
40				
41		11c	Strategies to improve adherence to intervention	Y:09-11,
42			protocols, and any procedures for monitoring adherence	Figure 2
43			(eg, drug tablet return, laboratory tests)	
44				
45		11d	Relevant concomitant care and interventions that are	NA
46			permitted or prohibited during the trial	
47				
48				
49	Outcomes	12	Primary, secondary, and other outcomes, including the	Y:10
50			specific measurement variable (eg, systolic blood	
51			pressure), analysis metric (eg, change from baseline,	
52			final value, time to event), method of aggregation (eg,	
53			median, proportion), and time point for each outcome.	
54			Explanation of the clinical relevance of chosen efficacy	
55			and harm outcomes is strongly recommended	
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1				
2	Participant	13	Time schedule of enrolment, interventions (including any	Y:09, Figure
3	timeline		run-ins and washouts), assessments, and visits for	2
4			participants. A schematic diagram is highly	
5			recommended (see Figure)	
6				
7	Sample size	14	Estimated number of participants needed to achieve	Y:09
8			study objectives and how it was determined, including	
9			clinical and statistical assumptions supporting any	
10			sample size calculations	
11				
12				
13	Recruitment	15	Strategies for achieving adequate participant enrolment	Y:09
14			to reach target sample size	
15				

### Methods: Assignment of interventions (for controlled trials)

#### Allocation:

16				
17				
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19				
20	Sequence	16a	Method of generating the allocation sequence (eg,	NA
21	generation		computer-generated random numbers), and list of any	
22			factors for stratification. To reduce predictability of a	
23			random sequence, details of any planned restriction (eg,	
24			blocking) should be provided in a separate document that	
25			is unavailable to those who enrol participants or assign	
26			interventions	
27				
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29				
30	Allocation	16b	Mechanism of implementing the allocation sequence (eg,	NA
31	concealment		central telephone; sequentially numbered, opaque,	
32	mechanism		sealed envelopes), describing any steps to conceal the	
33			sequence until interventions are assigned	
34				
35				
36	Implementation	16c	Who will generate the allocation sequence, who will enrol	NA
37			participants, and who will assign participants to	
38			interventions	
39				
40	Blinding	17a	Who will be blinded after assignment to interventions (eg,	NA
41	(masking)		trial participants, care providers, outcome assessors,	
42			data analysts), and how	
43				
44				
45		17b	If blinded, circumstances under which unblinding is	NA
46			permissible, and procedure for revealing a participant's	
47			allocated intervention during the trial	
48				

### Methods: Data collection, management, and analysis

49				
50				
51	Data collection	18a	Plans for assessment and collection of outcome,	Y:10-13
52	methods		baseline, and other trial data, including any related	
53			processes to promote data quality (eg, duplicate	
54			measurements, training of assessors) and a description	
55			of study instruments (eg, questionnaires, laboratory	
56			tests) along with their reliability and validity, if known.	
57			Reference to where data collection forms can be found, if	
58			not in the protocol	
59				
60				

	18b	Plans to promote participant retention and complete follow-up, including list of any outcome data to be collected for participants who discontinue or deviate from intervention protocols	Y
Data management	19	Plans for data entry, coding, security, and storage, including any related processes to promote data quality (eg, double data entry; range checks for data values). Reference to where details of data management procedures can be found, if not in the protocol	Y: 12-13
Statistical methods	20a	Statistical methods for analysing primary and secondary outcomes. Reference to where other details of the statistical analysis plan can be found, if not in the protocol	Y: 14-15
	20b	Methods for any additional analyses (eg, subgroup and adjusted analyses)	X
	20c	Definition of analysis population relating to protocol non-adherence (eg, as randomised analysis), and any statistical methods to handle missing data (eg, multiple imputation)	X
<b>Methods: Monitoring</b>			
Data monitoring	21a	Composition of data monitoring committee (DMC); summary of its role and reporting structure; statement of whether it is independent from the sponsor and competing interests; and reference to where further details about its charter can be found, if not in the protocol. Alternatively, an explanation of why a DMC is not needed	X
	21b	Description of any interim analyses and stopping guidelines, including who will have access to these interim results and make the final decision to terminate the trial	Y: 13
Harms	22	Plans for collecting, assessing, reporting, and managing solicited and spontaneously reported adverse events and other unintended effects of trial interventions or trial conduct	Y: 13
Auditing	23	Frequency and procedures for auditing trial conduct, if any, and whether the process will be independent from investigators and the sponsor	X

### **Ethics and dissemination**

1				
2	Research ethics approval	24	Plans for seeking research ethics committee/institutional review board (REC/IRB) approval	Y: 14
3				
4				
5	Protocol amendments	25	Plans for communicating important protocol modifications (eg, changes to eligibility criteria, outcomes, analyses) to relevant parties (eg, investigators, REC/IRBs, trial participants, trial registries, journals, regulators)	Y: 14
6				
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10	Consent or assent	26a	Who will obtain informed consent or assent from potential trial participants or authorised surrogates, and how (see Item 32)	Y: 09
11				
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15		26b	Additional consent provisions for collection and use of participant data and biological specimens in ancillary studies, if applicable	NA
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19	Confidentiality	27	How personal information about potential and enrolled participants will be collected, shared, and maintained in order to protect confidentiality before, during, and after the trial	Y: 13-15
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25	Declaration of interests	28	Financial and other competing interests for principal investigators for the overall trial and each study site	Y: 16
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28	Access to data	29	Statement of who will have access to the final trial dataset, and disclosure of contractual agreements that limit such access for investigators	NA
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33	Ancillary and post-trial care	30	Provisions, if any, for ancillary and post-trial care, and for compensation to those who suffer harm from trial participation	NA
34				
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36				
37	Dissemination policy	31a	Plans for investigators and sponsor to communicate trial results to participants, healthcare professionals, the public, and other relevant groups (eg, via publication, reporting in results databases, or other data sharing arrangements), including any publication restrictions	Y: 15
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44		31b	Authorship eligibility guidelines and any intended use of professional writers	NA
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48		31c	Plans, if any, for granting public access to the full protocol, participant-level dataset, and statistical code	X
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51	<b>Appendices</b>			
52				
53	Informed consent materials	32	Model consent form and other related documentation given to participants and authorised surrogates	X
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1  
2 Biological 33 Plans for collection, laboratory evaluation, and storage of NA  
3 specimens biological specimens for genetic or molecular analysis in  
4 the current trial and for future use in ancillary studies, if  
5 applicable  
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For peer review only

## 1. Informed Consent

### Patient Consent Form

Name of patient in block letters: .....

Date of birth: .....

I agree to participate in the patient survey and use of the digital support platform "Addison Care" in the project PiloTT-A: Piloting of the virtual telecare technology "Addison".

I have been informed that I can decline to participate without any adverse consequences, especially regarding my medical care.

The Paracelsus Medical Private University Salzburg (Austria) is responsible for conducting the survey in the context of using "Addison Care" as a digital support service for medical care needs.

I have been informed by Mr./Mrs. .... in a detailed conversation about the nature, type, scope and significance of the survey, as well as the aims of using the Addison Care platform, and have received a copy of this consent form.

It has been explained to me for what purpose, to what extent, on what legal basis and for how long my data from the survey will be stored and what rights I have towards the responsible party with regard to my personal data. I have received a corresponding data protection declaration as well as an information letter.

Furthermore, I agree that the clinic's physicians will hand over my current list of medications to a member of the project team.

In addition, I have been informed that by using the Addison Care platform, my usage behavior of this technology will be transmitted to the Paracelsus Medical Private University, based on data known to me.

Furthermore, I have read the text of this patient information and consent form, which comprises a total of 9 pages. I have had sufficient time to decide. I have no further questions at this time.

**I am aware that my participation in the project is voluntary and that I can revoke it at any time without giving reasons and without personal disadvantage for further medical and nursing treatment. In this case, the collected data will be completely deleted and I will be informed about it.**

I declare that I am willing to participate in the research project and consent to the associated processing of my personal data and the usage data of the Addison Care platform, which are known to me.

I consent to the processing of my data collected as part of this clinical trial and as described in the "Data Protection" section of this document.

1  
2  
3 Insofar as special personal data within the meaning of Art. 9 DSGVO, such as health data, are  
4 collected, my consent also relates to this information.  
5

6 **I hereby declare my voluntary participation in the survey.**  
7

8 I consent that any personal information I provide for the survey may be stored and scientifically  
9 processed by the Paracelsus Medical Private University Salzburg.  
10

11 My personal information will only be used for this research project. Once the survey has been  
12 completed, it will no longer be possible to make any further link to me as a person.  
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18 Patient's signature

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26 Surname, first name of the informing staff member  
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Ethikkommission der DGP • Stockumer Straße 12 • 58453 Witten

Paracelsus Medizinische Privatuniversität  
Herrn Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Jürgen Osterbrink  
Vorstand des Instituts für Pflegewissenschaft und -praxis  
Strubergasse 21  
A - 5020 Salzburg



Deutsche Gesellschaft für Pflegewissenschaft  
(DGP) e. V.  
Geschäftsstelle  
Bürgerstr. 47  
47057 Duisburg

Telefon: 0203 – 356793  
info@dg-pflegewissenschaft.de

Ethikkommission der Deutschen Gesellschaft  
für Pflegewissenschaft  
(DGP) e.V.  
Vorsitz Prof. Dr. Sabine Bartholomeyczik  
Stockumer Str. 12  
58453 Witten

[Ethikkommission@dg-pflegewissenschaft.de](mailto:Ethikkommission@dg-pflegewissenschaft.de)

Your proposal no. 21-037 to the ethical review committee of the German Society of Nursing Science (EK-DGP)

Dear Mr. Osterbrink,

the EK-DGP discussed and evaluated your proposal

*A pilot study of Addison Care, the Virtual Telecare Technology, - PiloTT-A (application no. 21-037)*  
submitted 2021-11-16.

The committee decided to give you an ethical approval.

Good luck for the project!

2021-12-27

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sabine Bartholomeyczik', is written over the text.

Prof. Dr. Sabine Bartholomeyczik  
Chairperson EK-DGP