

# Are robots a good solution for social and care activities for older adults with dementia?

Section: Society and gender

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## [International Day of Older Persons](#)

Demographic change is taking place more rapidly around the world than in Western societies in the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition to gains in life expectancy, birth rates are falling sharply, even in countries with generous parental leave and childcare policies. This growing scenario of ageing societies raises the question of how we can ensure the wellbeing and social inclusion of older adults.

Technological support to meet these needs and reduce the care burden on formal and informal carers is at the forefront. This is particularly dramatic when we consider the exponential growth of older adults with dementia. It is predicted that by 2050, there will be around 131.5 million people living with dementia.

What is the role of robotics in this big picture? What is its added value? And what are the ethical implications of using robots with older people with dementia? Can robots be used without explicit consent? Can this technology improve loneliness and communication in older adults? Can older people

with dementia distinguish between reality and imagination? In summary, what are the strengths and weaknesses of their use and their ethical implications?

A new research project, MyRobot, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Research, Innovation and Universities, will be launched on October 3rd with experts on the subject from all over the world to find answers and make progress from a social perspective. A first review paper on the subject has just been published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychiatry* entitled '[Ethical implications in using robots among older adults living with dementia](#)'