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Creating Possibilities



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Unsung heroes of homecare

Our point of view

The demand for homecare heroes

The intersection between the ageing population and the in-home caregiving sector is becoming increasingly apparent. As people get older, including those with disabilities, they experience a decline in various aspects of functioning, leading to a greater need for assistance and assistive products.



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the number of persons aged 80 years or older is expected to triple between 2020 and 2050. Regarding adults, 13% are affected by obesity, and there is little indication of this number declining.

With an ageing population and rising hospital costs, innovative healthcare delivery is needed. This has led to an unprecedented demand for caregivers, who are the unsung heroes of the care system. Healthcare workforce shortage is, however, a worldwide problem. Europe alone is facing a severe shortage of healthcare workers, with around 1.8 million job openings now, which is expected to reach 4 million by 2030. In short, there is an imbalance between need and supply.

Unfortunately, home healthcare workers, though they contribute significantly to the well-being of others, face unique risks on the job to their own safety and health. This is one of the reasons why these invaluable roles are often seen as having low status.

The risk of injury is often amplified because the work is performed in small, confined spaces like cramped home bathrooms or bedrooms, where manoeuvrability is severely limited.

As a result, proper care within the home setting is becoming increasingly complex and costly to secure.

Ensuring quality home care for our aging society

Given the current state of home care, our elderly and individuals with disabilities are at risk of receiving insufficient care that doesn't meet their rightful needs. And it's not just about their quality of life; it also affects their families and society, and this issue deserves our attention.

Caregivers, too, face a multitude of occupational hazards, including physical injuries, emotional stress, and burnout. These challenges contribute to higher rates of absenteeism and turnover.

If left unaddressed, this situation increases the risk of individuals being relocated from their beloved homes to long-term care facilities for safe and proper care. While these facilities may offer more manageable caregiving conditions, they may lack the personalisation and comfort many users desire.







Paving the way for dignity and independence

Working in bathrooms can be inherently challenging. Typically, space is limited, and residential bathrooms, in particular, are seldom designed to accommodate healthcare professionals.

Unfortunately, this often leads to selecting bathroom aids based on environmental constraints rather than considering the needs of individuals. This less-than-ideal situation highlights the complexity of assisted care, where decisions sometimes require compromises.

Assisting with the whole hygiene routine can be difficult, especially when the users cannot help. This often requires the caregiver to do physically demanding tasks and get into awkward positions, which can lead to work-related injuries over time. Around 40 to 48% of the home healthcare workers' time may be spent in a poor posture, like forward-bent and twisted positions linked to shoulder, neck, and back issues.

But imagine this scenario: our elderly and individuals with disabilities relishing their lives in the cosy confines of their own homes. They aren't merely "being taken care of" but experiencing life with grace, autonomy, and profound satisfaction.

Caregivers deliver exceptional service, unburdened by physical and emotional stress. This should translate into lower turnover rates, reduced absenteeism, and a happier, more productive staff for employers.

This scenario is a quadruple win, benefiting users and their families, caregivers and their employers. It ushers in a new era of healthcare that upholds the dignity of all involved, marking a significant advancement in quality, dignity and compassion.

How do we get there?

How ergonomic design empowers caregivers and clients

Here is where innovative assistive devices and patient-handling equipment come in, particularly our purpose-built mobile shower commode Alto.

From our research and experience, we know that a primary need for carers is having excellent access around the seat to reach and clean the user easily. However, it's not only about access; it also involves preventing caregivers from adopting awkward positions that can lead to discomfort and injuries.

While other shower commodes offer ease of manoeuvrability, chairs with a wide range of height adjustability, and chairs with a small footprint, none combine all three features to provide an elevated caregiving experience for the carer and the user.

With Alto, we address this and provide a solution that ensures convenience and comfort for caregivers and users alike – ergonomic access. Alto is unique with features like height adjustability, tilt functionality, generous openings for improved access, and a clean, compact design.

Crafted explicitly for small spaces, Alto ensures extreme manoeuvrability, granting 360-degree access and enabling stress-free care from a single caregiver. This enhances safety and simplifies and streamlines the caregiver's responsibilities, making their job much easier and more comfortable.

The compact design of Alto offers benefits not only to caregivers but also eliminates the need for many costly and cumbersome home renovations. Its purposeful design allows it to fit over most toilets and effortlessly pass through doorways, enabling users to comfortably remain in their homes for an extended duration.

With 360-degree access, exceptional manoeuvrability, and a compact design, caregivers can experience a significant reduction in stress and the risk of injury. And when caregivers feel supported, it directly translates into providing better, more dignified care.

References

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Founded in 1973, Etac is a world-leading developer and provider of ergonomic assistive devices and patient handling equipment. Our ambition is to provide solutions that optimise quality of life for the individual, family members and caregivers.

For the latest news and continuously updated product information – visit: www.etac.com

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