How The Internet of Things Can IMPROVE Risk Management in Memory Care
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Introduction
The Internet of Things refers to the interconnectedness of physical devices or things through the cloud. This connectivity enables data to be communicated between devices, also known as interoperability.

The IOT, the cloud, data sharing - these may all sound like modern age jargon, but when you think about it, the IOT isn’t necessarily new. All the components behind interoperability have been around for some time: the internet, smart-embedded devices, communication technologies, sensors. And, they have all had the ability to communicate with each other. Take for example your friendly, household robotic vacuum. It has sensors that tell it where to go and what to avoid, a docking station that calls it back home when the battery is low, and the ability to connect to your phone through an app. What is a fairly new and emerging idea is that the IOT can help streamline healthcare solutions in memory care.

IOT principles are already being applied in assisted living facilities to help manage risk improve the quality of patient-centered care with smart-sensor technologies. It’s estimated that there will be a $117 billion market for the IOT in healthcare by the year 2020. This means that smart-sensor technology in the healthcare industry is going to advance quickly. This white paper will cover some of the most important ways you can take advantage of that technology to help improve risk management in memory care.

Every 68 seconds, someone is diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, a disease that affects over million Americans. That number is expected to triple by 2050. To support the growing need, many assisted living facilities are including memory care in their services. However, memory care includes unique risks and therefore calls for unique solutions in order to provide optimal patient-centered care.
Risk areas that hinder patient-centered care in memory care facilities:
• staff management
• patient management
• patient safety

Competition among memory care providers has led many of them to turn to innovative solutions, such as RTLS-based smart-sensor technology to help manage those risks. Read on to learn more about how this type of technology can improve staff management, patient networking, and patient safety.

**What is a Real Time Location System (RTLS)?**

Real Time Location System technology is at the heart interoperable risk management systems. To understand how it’s so useful, we’ll first discuss what it is.

Real Time Location Systems use wireless tags that are attached to certain objects. These tags contain electronically stored information.

RTLS can serve the same purpose as a bar code or a magnetic strip on the back of a credit card - it provides a unique identifier for that object. Like barcodes, they also need to be scanned to retrieve the information.

RTLS can effectively track where people or things are in real time.

**Benefits of using RTLS**
• RTLS doesn’t need a line of sight.
• RTLS tags are durable and reusable.
• An RTLS tag can read/write. The tags can be read and the data on the tag can be rewritten or modified whenever it's needed.
• Data is encrypted.
• RTLS tags are capable of storing a ton of data.
How the IOT can help improve staff management through the use of Real Time Location System technology.

Assisted living facilities often use outdated systems, such as paper spreadsheets, to manage its staff. A poorly managed staff can lead to situations that increase the risk of death or injury, such as overworked staff members and slow response times. When dealing with patients that have memory diseases such as Alzheimer’s or dementia this risk is even higher.

Using RTLS devices in wearable wristbands, Skynet Healthcare allows facilities to uniquely identify staff members in a network and track and monitor their movements. The person monitoring the control center or automated software can send that information to the various control panels. This communication flow helps ensure that there is the right number of staff in the right location at the right time.

It can also improve response times using tiered alert systems that can be set up depending on your facility’s needs. For example, a patient can send an alert for assistance by pressing a button on his or her wristband. That alert is sent to an assigned staff member. If that staff member does not respond in the allotted time, an alert can be sent to a supervisor. If the supervisor does not respond in the allotted time, an alert is then sent to all staff members near the patient’s location. The RTLS smart sensors can also send alerts if unusual activity is detected.

The same RTLS wristbands used by the staff members can be used to uniquely identify patients in a network and track and monitor their movements. Like mentioned above, patients can use their wristbands to send alerts for assistance. Their patient information can also be stored on and accessed through the RTLS devices in the wristbands.
Properly managing staff and patients reduces safety concerns

There is constant fear of injury, death and elopement (escaping the facility) when you’re dealing with patients that have memory-related diseases.

The mortality rate within a year of a person with Alzheimer’s moving into a memory care unit is greater than 50 percent. This can be attributed to several different factors, like the ones listed below:

Factors that increase mortality rate in memory care patients
• Loss of ADL’s (activities of daily living: bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring, and continence.)
• The shock of a significant change in environment.
• Disruption in normal social engagement patterns.
• A loss of the “will to live.”
• Injury occurring during elopement (escaping the facility.)
• Injury that goes unnoticed or is not responded to quickly enough.

Risk management is crucial to providing your patients a healthier and happier life. All of these factors listed above can be avoided with proper risk management. The best way to reduce risk is to properly manage your staff and patients. Streamlining your data flow using RTLS devices that communicate through the IOT will ensure you meet that goal.

About Skynet Healthcare Technologies

Skynet Healthcare Technologies is a technology company that connects residents, families and caregivers through proprietary smart facility technologies. Based in the Tampa Bay region of Florida, Skynet Healthcare Technologies enables care solutions for the entire senior care continuum. Our customers rely on our real-time location monitoring through the use of intelligent wearables, to improve staff workflow efficiencies, ultimately leading to better outcomes in quality of care. We leverage our deep understanding of Real Time Location Tracking technology and state-of-the-art data assessment to help you create a more supportive, streamlined, and responsive organization.

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