

Pilot study of the German innovAge internet platform for carers: discussing usefulness and virtual social support



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Contents

1. German sample

the German carers in the INNOVAGE study

2. The Pilots Test

focussing on carers interaction and video chat sessions

3. Discussion

unefulness of the web platform

4. Final remarks

The German Pilot - Sample

Sample

- **Sampling design:** convenience sample approach
- **Involved carers:** 20 carers (T0), 12 carers (T1)

65% women

~ 61 years old

55% sons &
daughters

35% working
carers

Generally
supported by
care services

Moderate &
experienced
internet users

The German Pilot Test

Services tested

- (a) information resources and self-assessment;
- (b) individual support (via private messages, e-mail);
- (c) social network;
- (d) forum;
- (e) chat;
- (f) videochat.

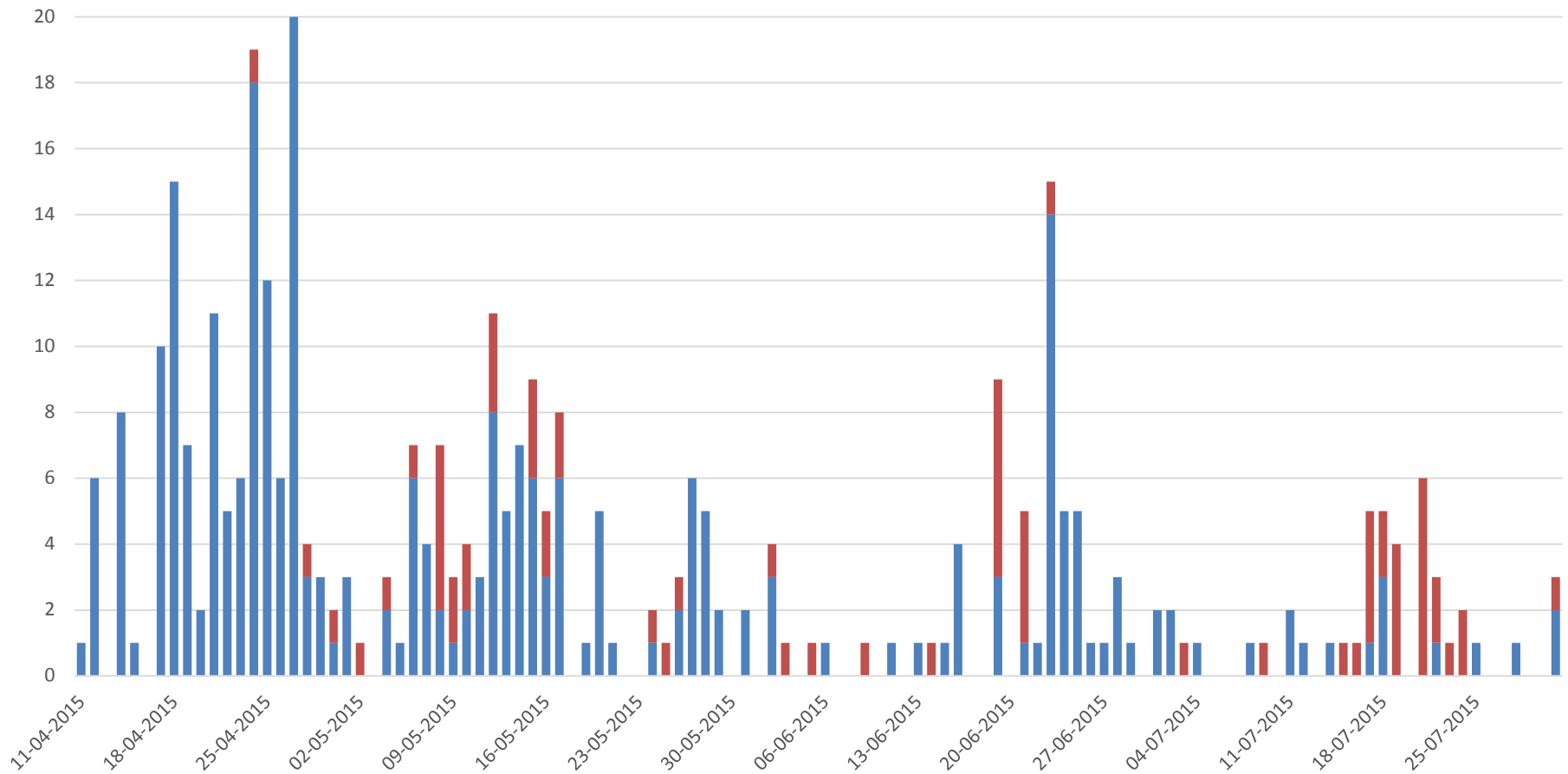
Support offered to carers

Information

Advice /
Counseling

Peer
Support

Interaction during the pilot



Interaction during the pilot

Carer
interaction

Eager to
get in
touch

Frequent
exchange

Receded in
the 2nd
half

Frequent
exchange
at the end

Popular
services

Social
Network

Messages

Forum

The Video Chat sessions

2 groups

Weekly 60min
sessions

moderated

Open

The Video Chat sessions

Carers talked about issues openly

Carers showed interest in other group members

Topics: practical advice, emotional support, family conflicts, life after care

Interaction outside the Video Chat

DISCUSSION

Main benefits



Online based support services can complement traditional services perfectly



Virtual support groups can provide social support



Carers can get the most out of an online support by using it frequently

Photos flickr, credit to: Scott Maxwell & martin.canchola

Challenges



Low „interest“ in the study mirrors reluctance of German carers to use online services



Less digitally skilled carers might be excluded from support



Interactive services don't manage themselves

Photos flickr, credit to: metro centric & jurek d.

FINAL REMARK

User's quote

I found the interactive services to be the most exciting and useful part of the platform for me.

Please continue to offer this to carers in Germany!

Thank you for your attention!

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