



## **BRAZILIAN SOCIETY OF GERONTECNOLOGY SBGTEC**

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## **GERONTECNOLOGY: TECHNOLOGY AS A FUNDAMENTAL TOOL FOR HEALTH CARE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC - AND THE FUTURE**

Dear Colleagues,

The Brazilian Society of Gerontechnology, recognizing the gravity of the situation that both Brazil and the world are facing since the first cases of contagious by COVID-19, through this letter reiterates that:

- 1) Gerontechnology understands that technology must be at the service of the society;
- 2) Gerontechnology is an interdisciplinary field that unites the knowledge of Gerontology and technology, focusing on care and assistance to the health demands of older individuals, in order to maintain and improve the quality of life for the aging population;
- 3) The main mission of SGBTEC is to study, develop and promote technological innovations in products and services that support the elderly, their families, caregivers and professionals in their needs, based on interdisciplinary scientific knowledge recognizing the cultural and individual differences of the population groups that compose the society;
- 4) Through innovation, technology and the design of sustainable and adaptable environments for ageing groups, it supports the relationship and social participation of the elderly, valuing good health, comfort and safety in this population;
- 5) Contributes to society to build generations of older people who are more independent and resilient in their lifestyle and activities.

Considering that the use of technologies in care goes through important issues, such as:

- The incipient incorporation of technological tools in broad public health care;
- Regional inequalities and access to connectivity;
- Little ability to use technology by the older population, especially 70+;
- Rapid response in sharing information received without due critical analysis, which may allow for the spread of fake news and opportunism;

SBGTEC recognizes:

- a) The potential of using telehealth, in the form of applications and other tools, for use with patients, caregivers and professionals;
- b) The importance of tele-appointments in solving less complex health problems, by means of distance guidance, preventing the patient from traveling to the health service;
- c) The tracking of illness conditions with remote assessment of health status scales and index, enabling more assertive decision-making to guide interventions that are more suited to the clinical case and allow for more sustainable use of health resources;
- d) The possibility of the elderly or their caregivers to check a set of data, self-assess their health condition and send the data to their doctor and other health professionals;
- e) Monitor health parameters by means of sensors that allow the collection of relevant clinical data for assessing the health status of the elderly, at various stages of the screening, which can be sent digitally to clinical control centers for health conditions;
- f) The potential of using distance tools for prescribing and monitoring during exercises and activities for patients who need long-term care, in the process of rehabilitation, people with disabilities and cognitive impairment who have accessibility and mobility barriers to health services;
- g) Develop communication systems between professionals in remote areas and caregivers through digital platforms with video and audio links, increasing the significance of health guidance and decision making, while streamlining medical care and the care team;

h) Recognizes that, in addition to personal and community care, data recorded by services using distance care can:

- Predict broad flows of the trajectory of an epidemic in a population;
- Expand the use of therapeutic resources complementary to face-to-face therapies;
- Expand the individual's capacities for self-assessment, monitoring and co-participation in their health care process.

Thus, SBGTEC reiterates:

a) The urgency of regulation for the full use of technological resources for the different classes of health and social assistance professionals in the ways of:

- Teleassistance
- Teleconsultation
- Telemonitoring
- Telerehabilitation
- Assisted environments and sensors

b) The urgency in teaching health professionals to use technological tools as a complementary resource to face-to-face therapies;

c) The need to expand the skills development of older people to use technologies aimed at information, communication and social participation;

d) The incorporation of technological assistance tools in the planning and scoping of public and private programs and networks, shaping a sustainable care network supported by friendly technologies and with solutions focused on the greatest social gain, reinforcing the recommendations of SUS (Public Health System).

*Professor Carla da Silva Santana Castro*  
*President*

