



MyRobot

Research Project PID2023-147169NB-I00.

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UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI



Seminar series *CARE ROBOTICS*

Exploring Robotics in Eldercare: Debates and Reflections

October 27, 2026

**Sala de Graus. Campus Catalunya
Av. Catalunya, 35. Universitat Rovira i Virgili**

The aim of this seminar is to reflect, debate, and present scientific findings on a highly controversial topic: the use of robots in care and their contribution to social care systems. Emerging approaches are increasingly moving beyond idealised or speculative visions, often shaped by future imaginaries and science fiction, towards more realistic perspectives that conceptualise care technologies as supportive elements rather than substitutes for human care. A growing body of research on eldercare and robotics reports positive outcomes associated with their use. These technologies can enhance sociability, acting as “social facilitators,” providing companionship, and even supporting psychological well-being. In some cases, they are also used in more clinical roles, contributing to emotional support and helping to reduce social isolation among older adults, particularly, those living with dementia. Despite these positive findings and practical experiences, on the acceptance of being cared for by robots remains controversial. Ethical concerns persist, to explore matters on dehumanisation, privacy, autonomy, and the risk of replacing human caregiving. This seminar aims to bring these debates to the forefront and to advance critical reflection within the field of eldercare and robotics.

The seminar is organized in the framework of the project *Human-Robot Interaction with older adults suffering from dementia: Sociocultural and gender differences and ethical and professional implications in the use of companion robots* (MyRobot). Coordinated by Blanca Deusdad and Fernando Vidal (PID2023-147169NB-I00, Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, FEDER EU). The seminar is also part of the ‘Caring Robotics’ seminar series, organized in cooperation with the Global Observatory of Long-Term Care and the Medical Anthropology Research Center. (GOLTC-LSE; MARC-DAFITS-URV)



<https://bit.ly/4hM9wox>

Collaboration:



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9:00h	Welcome. Prof. Enric Castelló, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Dr. Jaume Vallverdú, Head of the Department of Anthropology, Philosophy and Social Work. URV.
9:15h	Presentation of the Seminar <i>Care Robotics</i> and Chair of the session: Dr. Blanca Deusdad. Department of Anthropology, Philosophy and Social Work. URV.
9:30h	<i>Companion robots</i> Prof. Elizabeth Broadbent. Centre for Automation and Robotic Engineering Science. University of Auckland, New Zealand
11:00h	<i>Coffee-Break</i>
11:30h	Chair of the Session: Prof. Fernando Vidal. ICREA/URV. Department of Anthropology, Philosophy and Social Work. URV. <i>Robotics to support care workers. CLOTHILDE: Cloth manipulation learning from demonstration” (ERC Advanced Grant)</i> Prof. Carme Torras. Institute of Robotics. Technical University of Catalonia (UPC) and CSIC.
13.00h	<i>Roundtable discussion: Robots in Eldercare</i> Roundtable Chair: Blanca Deusdad and Fernando Vidal Prof. Elizabeth Broadbent; Prof. Carme Torras; Prof. Jose García-Alonso (International Society for Gerontechnology. University of Extremadura); Prof. Slawomir Tobis, Saltó (Poznan University of Medical Sciences) and Mr. Jordi Cabau (Saltó robotics company).
14:00h	End meeting