Samueli Institute at Beilinson Hospital and XOLTAR Launch AI Companion for Breast Cancer Patients

Innovative AI-powered virtual companion aims to improve quality of life for breast cancer patients by providing 24/7 support and monitoring side effects

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, August 13, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Samueli Integrative Cancer Pioneering Institute at Davidoff Cancer Center in Beilinson, and startup company XOLTAR sign a multi-year agreement to jointly lead an innovative research project: an AI companion to support breast cancer patients and monitor side effects during oncological treatments.

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> *Prof. Gal Merkel, Director of the Davidoff Center*

What will the application do?
- Patients will be able to video chat 24/7 with AI-based virtual companions, report symptoms, and consult with them.
- Based on collected data, the AI companion will guide the patient to take care of side effects using medications and techniques they are already equipped with.
- When necessary, a message will be sent to the medical team.
- The accumulated information collected through the application will be used by the medical team to improve treatment for all patients.

Breast cancer patients suffer from multiple side effects resulting from the oncological treatment they receive, such as diarrhea, nausea, joint pain, mood decline, and more. Some side effects, if not treated in time, can develop into conditions requiring immediate medical attention.

Previous studies have shown that self-reporting of side effects by patients at home, with prompt response from the medical team, significantly improves quality of life and survival chances for oncology patients.

Given the scope of this issue, the Samueli Integrative Cancer Pioneering Institute at the Davidoff Center in Beilinson, part of the Clalit Group, and the Israeli startup company XOLTAR have initiated a research project called EngageX. This project will personally accompany breast cancer

patients treated at the Davidoff Center and help them, using AI technology, to reduce side effects caused by treatments.

XOLTAR has developed an application that communicates with patients through a companion based on AI technology. Patients will be able to video chat with the AI companion through the mobile phone app and consult about side effects they experience from treatments.

Currently, appointments with the treating physician occur once every three weeks. Between appointments, patients have no direct response to side effects and feelings they experience during treatments, which affect their quality of life.

Asaf Shiloni, CEO and founder of XOLTAR, explains: "The AI companion will conduct free-guided conversations and answer patients' questions. The responses will be professional and personal, defined by the medical team, not bot responses. The application will communicate with the patient, personalize the patient's journey, and accompany them throughout treatment. The patient can choose the virtual character that will accompany them, which can be male or female."

An example question a patient could ask the application:
"I started new pills yesterday and have been suffering from severe nausea for 24 hours. Should I contact the doctor?"

The AI companion will converse with the patient, ask additional questions, and advise on how to proceed: whether to seek medical treatment or if these are routine side effects that can be treated at home with medications already provided or simple home techniques. Simultaneously, the application will send an alert to the medical team about the patient's inquiry, so that if necessary, the team can provide an immediate medical response.

The initial study will involve 200 patients using the application, with a control group of 400 other patients. The research side is led by Samueli Institute researchers, in collaboration with the medical teams of the Davidoff Center, headed by Prof. Gal Merkel, Director of the Davidoff Center, and Prof. Rinat Yerushalmi, Head of the Breast Oncology Unit. The medical team is responsible for the clinical protocol embedded in the system, based on which the application provides responses to patients.

Prof. Gal Merkel, Director of the Davidoff Center: "Our goal at the Davidoff Center, in Beilinson Hospital, is to cure our patients while significantly improving their quality of life. The Samueli Institute has taken on the mission to develop breakthrough technologies and approaches to achieve this goal. I believe that the combination of the high professionalism of the medical teams at the Davidoff Center, the innovation of the Samueli Institute, and the unique artificial intelligence capabilities of XOLTAR will bring about a fundamental change in the quality of life of patients participating in the project. Our aspiration is to create a profound change in the way patients and their disease are treated, initially in breast cancer and later in other cancer areas."

Avner Paz-Tsuk, CEO of the Samueli Institute: "The goal of this innovative project is to provide immediate, tailored, and more accurate responses to patients and significantly improve their quality of life along with improving the clinical outcomes of oncological and complementary treatments. Patients will receive more continuous medical response and monitoring. The application will also save patients from unnecessary visits to the healthcare system. Additionally, the knowledge gathered through the application will allow for more precise and improved treatment for all patients by focusing on addressing issues that affect patients' quality of life. I believe that together with our partners, we will bring good news in the quality of care for breast cancer patients, and in general."

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