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## TITLE: Devices, mobile apps help keep elderly safe

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SINGAPORE: As Singapore's silver generation grows in number, so do the challenges in keeping them safe. Local technology developers are starting to cater to this market, through the use of both mobile applications and non-intrusive devices.

The LUV1 device keeps a quiet watch at homes which have elderly people living in them. Developed by local firm Nextan, the sensor-based wireless elderly monitoring system is less intrusive than camera-based systems.

It analyses activity in homes and notifies caregivers if any anomalies are discovered. It is also intelligent enough to differentiate between people who are sleeping and those who have lost consciousness after a fall.

Sean Tan, managing director of Nextan, said: "It's basically infrared -- it picks up activity or movement. The multiple sensors placed across and around a unit, you could extract intelligent information out from it.

"From a person's movement, it can rapidly tell how well they are, or if there is any kind of so-called emergency that needs to be responded to."

From sensors to trackers, developers are increasingly finding eldercare applications for their technologies. With more companies choosing to collaborate with voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs), such technologies are also being applied in the real world.

One such VWO is the Lions Befrienders -- with many elderly individuals under their care living alone, systems such as the LUV1 acts as a safety net that augments house visits by their volunteers.

Goh Boo Han, executive director of Lions Befrienders, said: "Occasionally, you have reports in the press that seniors die at home and go unnoticed for days. We hope that this system will help us with enabling the seniors to call for help on a more timely basis."

Technology to enhance the safety of the elderly is still in its infancy, and costs to develop and implement them remain high.