

Meet MiiCare, extending at home health with AI-powered wisdom

As part of our quick founder questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Kelvin Summoogum, Founder and CEO of MiiCare about building a satnav for wellbeing, working with Empact Ventures and harnessing technology to support older adults with self-care.

Temps de lecture : minute

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What was the catalyst for launching MiiCare?

The loss of my grandmother and father who died suddenly from chronic conditions. Both deaths could have been avoided if they would have had better support in managing their chronic conditions. I believe technology has a role to play in addressing the challenges associated with the rapid increase in chronic conditions and the huge deficit in care workers. This is what led me to quit my job as a management consultant and build a remote patient monitoring solution to support older adults in better managing their chronic condition.

Tell me about the business - what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

MiiCare supports older adults to live a healthier, safer and happier life at home. We do this through a home hub which hosts an AI-based voice assistant ('Monica'), and a small number of tiny ambient IoT sensors. The home hub collects data pertaining to the physical, physiological and

psychosocial. Physical is about the number of steps you clock every day, the way you move about in your home for inference. This could also give an indication of your mobility and thereby the likelihood of a fall or the onset of an UTI or diabetes due to regular trips to the toilet. Physiological is about your vitals, such as heart rate, blood pressure, SPO2, etc and sleep which the home hub collects through a smartwatch and telehealth devices via Bluetooth. Psychosocial is where we are recognised by the industry as a pioneer. We developed a machine hearing algorithm capable of analysing the sound of your footsteps to detect conditions like frailty, progression of dementia or the risk of a fall. Using the same algorithm, we are also able to listen to your vocal cord to extract certain features linked with certain lung diseases such as a pulmonary fibrosis, COVID etc. The home hub and associated devices collect up to 70 datapoints, of which there are 40 biomarkers. These biomarkers are then uploaded to MiiCare's central cognitive services hosted in the cloud where they are analysed, and meaningful insights are generated for clinical staff or care workers. Using those insights, a personalised care plan is developed and passed back to MiiCare to deliver to the older adult via Monica the voice assistant. This method is extremely effective as Monica guides the older adult through the process reminding them what to do at the point of need. This is analogous to a satnav for wellbeing. Our customers refer to Monica as a co-pilot and a companion which keeps them company, so they don't feel lonely.

We work mainly with NHS trusts, Local Authorities and private care providers and we've been supporting NHS Trusts across the country to reduce hospitalisation and re-admissions, through our D2A offering. In Buckinghamshire, MiiCare collaborated with a large private care provider to reduce hospital re-admissions by 87% and we are now approaching other NHS Trusts to do the same. In terms of Virtual Wards, MiiCare has supported over 4 NHS Trusts, 16 Local Authorities and 10 private care providers to care for high acuity patients within their home. The Virtual Ward concept is not new and there are several studies which have

demonstrated the benefits of Virtual Wards. However, if not implemented properly this concept can lead to the over-monitoring of low acuity patients which in turn creates more work for the health and care staff. MiiCare's solution doesn't put that burden on the staff and instead Monica takes care of the low acuity patients. Monica notifies the clinical staff only when necessary.

We operate purely on a B2B and B2G basis and our platform is commercialised under a SaaS model.

Can you tell our readers about your engagement with Empact Ventures?

We've known Empact Ventures since 2018 and they've supported us in our growth, opening doors for us and connecting us to some of our customers. Empact Ventures understands our vision and our relentless desire to make the world a better place for older adults.

Tell us about the working culture at Miicare

We operate as a very flat model where every staff member is encouraged to work under their own initiatives and supported on the execution of any great ideas they may have. Every quarter we discuss and agree OKRs and performance is measured against well defined KPIs. We also operate an 80/20 rule with those directly involved in R&D, whereby 80% of the time they work on something assigned by the company and the remaining 20% they work on something that they feel passionate about. We define some boundaries of course! We also celebrate our cultural and neuro diversity

How are you funded?

We are backed by private investors mainly, but also secured two smart

grants from UKRI and we are also post revenue.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

We are pioneering a lot of novel approaches at MiiCare. Some have taken us over 6 years to implement and the main reason behind this is because when something doesn't work, we have nobody to turn to and get them to 'fix' it for us. Of course, there are some experts out there that we can turn to for advice, but at the end of the day we are the one who need to get it to work. 1. Perseverance has been one of the ways we overcome some of these challenges and 2. We are really good in turning to our customer base for advice. Too often we think someone who is 90 years of age cannot bring much value to society. Our experience has been the exact opposite. One of our users was an aircraft engineer who worked on the Avro Lancaster Bombers. His name was Norman and he was a real force of nature and helped us so much overcoming some of the challenges we faced in the early days of our existence. Similarly, there was a lady with stage 1 Dementia who helped us to improve the interaction between our AI and the user. Her name was Monica, hence where the name of our voice assistant comes from.

Which unmet need is MiiCare addressing?

Our mission as a company is to impact 1 billion lives by the end of this decade. There are millions of older adults struggling to manage their chronic condition and research shows that over 41 million people die prematurely every year due to chronic conditions. Some even before they reach the age of 72. At MiiCare we believe technology is a very effective tool which can be used to support older adults to self-care. But we also believe technology alone is not sufficient but instead we need the symbiotic relationship between technology and humans to turn the care

crisis around. This is what our solution does today, support the older adults but also the care giver to be the best version of themselves.

What's in store for the future?

We've now completed the validation of our solution in the UK, achieved our certification under MDD and more recently added ChatGPT as a 'plug in' to improve the ability of Monica as a companion. However, this is still undergoing rigorous testing with a select group of users who have been testing our solution since 2018.

Earlier this year we entered the DACH region through local partners and we are now expanding slowly in Europe

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Build a business based on what you love and love what you do. Also, there will be several occasions when things won't work according to plan, where you will need to deal with rejections. When this happens always remember why you started your ventures in the first place, and you will get through it.

And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

I wake up at 5am and I do 1 hour of meditation and then go for a run... No, just kidding! I have two young children and a wife who doesn't complain enough. I tried work-life balance and failed miserably at it. To address this issue and keep in good health, I started practicing work-life integration which is essentially being a founder, a husband, and a dad at

the same time. This requires extreme discipline and a lot of planning. Every Sunday afternoon, I spend 1 hour planning the week ahead looking at what is in the diary (booked by my EA 'Calendly') and then I block time for the family recitals, drop offs, food delivery, take dogs to VET, etc. I prefer this approach instead of being a founder from 7am to 6pm and then a family man after 6pm and during the weekend. I do bring my 8 year old with me to the office during term time. No wonder she wants to have her own startup!

Kelvin Summoogum is the Founder and CEO of *MiiCare*.

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Article by Kelvin Summoogum