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Curaco CEO Lee Hoon-sang "Care paradigm will change from human care to robot care"

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[Editor's note: 'Nursing iN' will meet with nursing associations, nursing and social welfare academia, healthcare companies, and politicians, and we will work together to find a way forward for the happy life of seniors.]

Curaco CEO Lee Hoon-sang [Photo = Yoyang News]

"Paper diapers will gradually disappear and excretory care robots will be the only alternative."

The need to excrete is the most basic human need. It's also an important need for the elderly in nursing homes, but in the facility, they can't sit on the toilet and excrete feces and urine. As we age, our bladder function deteriorates, and most of the elderly have to spend the day in diapers. This is because there are obvious disadvantages before and after care, such as 6~8 diaper changes per resident, neglect after excretion, and disposable garbage.

Recently, there has been an opinion that diapers can be replaced by robots. Among them, the excretory care robot 'Care Bidet' developed by Curaco is attracting attention. Curaco's Care Bidet is a fecal excretion treatment device for people with disabilities, such as the elderly, seriously ill patients, and bedridden patients. CEO Lee Hoon-sang, who met at Curaco's headquarters on November 11, said, "It is clear that the shortage of caregivers is a problem that will only intensify due to the demographic structure.

As a result, the demand for care robots is gradually increasing both domestically and internationally." Among them, 'Curaco' showed changes before, during, and after using the care robot to satisfy patients and its stakeholders.

The advantages of robot care are outstanding.

The elderly population in Korea is close to 9.5 million, and there are more than 2.025 million people who are certified for long-term care insurance for the elderly. By 65, the number of people aged 20 and over will exceed <>% of the total, so it is urgent to solve the problem of caregiving.

CEO Lee, who took care of his bedridden father due to cerebral infarction, also entered the excretory care robot business to solve the problem of diaper care. And after 15 years of development, it has changed the life cycle of care. If we divide this life cycle into time points, it can be broadly divided into before, during, and after use. The series of changes that go through from before the start of the service to the use of excretory care robots is more noteworthy than ever.



Curaco's excretory care robot 'Care Bidet' [Photo = Curaco]

"The number of people who will be provided with care is insufficient compared to the population in need of care. The alternative is technology that facilitates the convenience of nursing home caregivers." When a diaper is filled, the excrement is checked every two hours, and the nursing care worker has to change it every time, but the robot throws away the effort. In particular, excretory management is not the only job of nursing care workers. However, since I am in charge of several elderly people, the amount of time I spend on diaper care alone is more than I imagined. The 'pre-use' work that diaper care had has been eliminated by robot care.

The shortcomings during use have also been improved. He said, "Wearing diapers for long periods of time is humid. Even perineal care, which requires a lot of man-hours, is cleaner with machines than with humans," he said, explaining the benefits of robots by saying, "All users of care robots expressed very high satisfaction." In addition to alleviating the workload of nursing care workers, which was pointed out as the most problematic, it also improved the sense of shame and skin diseases that recipients may experience during excretory care.



How to use

the excretory care robot 'Care Bidet' [Photo = Curaco website]

In the case of bedridden patients, pressure ulcers are bound to occur frequently due to the pressure of the body for a long time, and diapers are likely to worsen the disease if the feces are not changed in time. However, the use of excretory care robots lowers the risk of these diseases. Elderly people who are using Curaco can use the bidet even while lying down, so the inconvenience such as foreign body sensation that accompanies diaper care has been eliminated.

Finally, it also solved the problem of diaper waste. The robot can be reused when the waste container is emptied. Due to the nature of the material, disposable diapers must be disposed of by burying them in the ground or burning them. It takes at least 100 years for these landfilled diapers to decompose. "Production, transportation, and disposal of disposable diapers generate a lot of carbon dioxide. The cost of reducing carbon dioxide alone is about 1 billion won a year." Environmental groups have consistently raised the issue of refraining from using diapers.

If you accept it, it will be different... Improving the quality of care services

In response to this innovation in care, Japan quickly embraced Curaco. Currently, long-term care insurance recipients pay only 10% of the deductible and use excretory care robots. However, there is still a sense of rejection of care robots in Korea. Regarding this, CEO Lee said, "Experience and time to get used to it are essential. The need for change has been pushed to the back burner as the care field prioritizes urgent tasks," he said, emphasizing that care robots are bound to become popular, saying, "It's much easier once you learn."

In fact, nursing facilities are basically responsible for more than 1~7 people per nursing care worker. However, on days when even one person is out of staff, such as annual leave or sick leave, the number of residents that the remaining care workers have to take care of increases ridiculously. The representative, who is familiar with the care field, said, "Service providers lack publicity, and service recipients seem to be reluctant in terms of cost."

Currently, care robots are becoming more active overseas than in Korea. When asked how to quickly spread the product in the Korean market, he replied that it is public support. The rental plan is about the cost of diapers used per month, but if it is designated as a welfare equipment in the long-term care insurance for the elderly, 85% of the total amount will be subsidized, making it more accessible to consumers thanks to the lower price.

Robot care is an important issue that is directly related to improving the quality of care, but in reality, it has not been widely used. Technology has developed rapidly, but the field of care is poor. CEO Lee said, "The most difficult thing for nurses in nursing hospitals is to take care of their bowels. Nursing home workers are much better off with less time spent on diapers to provide other care services. In the future, there will be advanced caregivers who can predict diseases with excretion data," he said, urging the introduction of robot care.

In addition, regarding the future of the care market for care robots, CEO Lee said, "The salaries of long-term care workers and caregivers will also increase. Increasingly, the quality of long-term care services is also improving. We will provide a high service with a high salary."