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PRESS RELEASE

Robots – a help or a hindrance when it comes to fighting Covid-19?

The Covid-19 crisis has proven that robots and AI can provide crucial assistance on many levels, according to new analysis from Professor Héctor González-Jiménez at ESCP Business School.

From being used to deliver medicine to patients diagnosed with Covid-19, to measuring patient's temperatures while doctors and nurses speak to them via automaton, robot potential continues to exceed expectations across the globe.

In China, as many civilians are quarantined in their homes, the government have also provided logistics robots to deliver medical supplies and food to homes in Wuhan.

But are the robots here to stay? Can they truly help us to overcome the coronavirus health crisis and lockdown? To an extent, yes, but it should not be underestimated how much humans appreciate a human face, especially in time of need.

"Despite the usefulness of robots, a sudden confrontation with a robot, without human support, may in fact further exacerbate stress and anxiety in an individual who is already going through trauma. As well as this, people may also be overestimating robot capabilities, particularly in crisis situations. The appearance of such robots could actually create a false sense of hope for patients. Worse, technical mishaps in difficult terrains could even lead to further complications" says **Professor González-Jiménez**.

The researchers warn that while the advantages and disadvantages of robots need to be closely monitored, recent examples from Asia indicate that when used in a careful manner, robots can be valuable partners in times of crisis. Compassion is something that cannot be compromised though, and during this period of uncertainty, we must not underestimate the power of human care.

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