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Pain relief: Mustafa Atee demonstrates the ePAT app.  
Picture: Ross Swanborough

## FACE VIDEOS REVEAL THE HIDDEN PAIN

### VETTI KAKULAS Business Reporter

MUSTAFA Atee believes no one should suffer in silence, especially those unable to communicate.

The Curtin University clinical pharmacy PhD student has worked with the institution's former head of pharmacy Jeff Hughes to develop a facial recognition app to detect pain through "micro expressions".

Using a smartphone's camera, the Electronic Pain Assessment Tool (ePAT) records a 10 second video to

identify pain for those with dementia.

The app then uses facial recognition technology to identify certain patterns and indicators of pain through specific muscle movements.

Finally the data, combined with non-facial cues, such as sweating or pale faces, are used to calculate a pain severity score.

The ePAT team is also working on a similar app to assess young children who

can't yet talk about pain they're experiencing.

"I want to make sure people are heard – to suffer in silence would be horrible," Mr Atee said.

"My grandma passed away from dementia, she was 86. My other emotional drive is that I was working at a pharmacy 16 years ago when I came across a patient who started verbally abusing me for no reason.

"He had Alzheimer's dis-

ease. It stuck in my head – I knew I had to do something about this."

Mr Atee said uncontrolled pain could result in people exhibiting behavioural problems, such as aggression and agitation.

"It can be very harmful, that's why I wanted to do something about it," he said.

ePAT has been successfully trialled at three aged care homes in WA, including Juniper, Brightwater and



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Bethanie.

Forty residents with moderate to severe dementia were observed during a 12-week period, the “excellent” result was a high correlation of 0.9 out of 1.

ePAT Technologies started trading on the ASX last month via a backdoor listing through former mining company MinQuest.

The app will be commercialised in the second half of 2017.

Mr Atee won a scholarship to present ePAT Technologies at the Creative Innovation Asia Pacific 2016 in Melbourne next week.