

5th EUROPEAN HEALTH FORUM GASTEIN –

On the Future of Health in Europe
25 to 28 September 2002

Lunch Session 5
Petra Wilson
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**Does Inspector Gadget
come after all?**

**Developments on the
biomedical clothing market**



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Information Science in the Health Sector¹

The „Information Societies Technologies“- program (IST) of the European Union does research on the health sector in an international context. In the limelight stands the development of new technologies and networks, which encourage mutual trust and cooperation despite national differences. As Petra Wilson explained at the 5th European Health Forum Gastein, there is an overwhelming demand for research, especially for biomedical research. The catchword is “ambient intelligence”. When using this term, representatives of the IST mean kinds of artificial intelligence, which surround the patient like an electronic protective coat.

Inspector Gadget’s intelligent coat

Wilson mentioned the example of “thinking clothing” (Intelligent Biomedical Clothing). Based on technological concepts of the US army, textile threads are currently developed, in which our whole computer knowledge will be woven into. The washable blouses, shirts and coats are equipped with an integrated computer (and walk-man!), the user interface is the surface of the clothing – a textile keyboard so to speak.

Electronical Health Manager

It may sound like the cranky idea of a underworked Techno-Freak at first, but useful applications in the medical sector can not be denied. The “Wearable Mother-Board” for

¹ Dateiname: LS 5 – Inspektor Gadget (St., 26.9.)

instance - high-tech rompers for babies - register constantly the body temperature, the heart rate and other medical data of the baby by means of skin contact. This means a relief of strain for mothers and nurses. For the baby it is certainly more comfortable not to be confronted with cables and tubes, too. "Clothinks" are not only interesting for neonatal care units, but also for private use. For chronic diseases, which have to be examined over a longer period of time, or for old patients, who suffer debility and need distant electronical supervising, this technology bears a lot of benefits. The ideal is a "Healthy Life-Style Manager" fit for wear, which watches the health of people of future generations and overtakes their worries regarding health.