



Sarco Project - June 2023 Update

Sarco Project is a research and development initiative of Exit International with the goal of de-medicalising and democratising death.

There has been developments in some of the four components of Sarco Project. The update provides a summary:

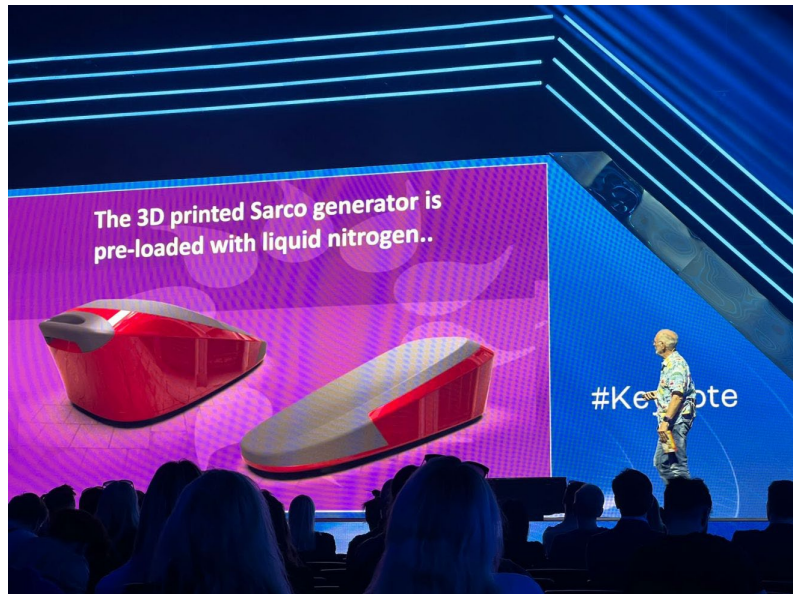
The 4 components to Sarco Project:

- Construction of a 3D printed Sarco to provide a peaceful hypoxic death.
- Programming of Sarco Raspberry Pi software to allow access to the machine.
- Development of AI screening to ensure those seeking access have mental capacity.
- Development of an implantable switch for those anticipating mental capacity loss.

This update provides information on the current state of each of these components.

Sarco #1 and Sarco #2 have been 3D printed but are non-functioning. In June 2023 Sarco #1 was placed on display as part of the 50th anniversary of the Dutch assisted dying organisation NVVE where it was used as part of a discussion on the future of death and dying.

The Sarco Project featured in a presentation as part of the LOGIN 2023 conference in Vilnius, where the topic was the role of new technologies in changing the way we die.



- **Construction of the 3D printed Sarco #3**

Sarco #3 printing and assembly has reached the stage where the first instrument testing has taken place. The first trials on June 5 & 6 were successful, with the capsule [O₂] concentration dropping to less than 0.5% in the first 30 secs of machine operation, and at 10 minutes the capsule oxygen concentration was still less than 5%. Temperature in the capsule dropped to about 10C before rising to ambient at about 5 minutes.

A demonstration of the Sarco #3 operation for media and other interested parties is planned for August 2023. Date and location will be announced.

Sarco #3 undergoes first liquid nitrogen trial



- **Programming of Sarco Raspberry Pi software to allow access to the machine**

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- **Development of AI screening to ensure those seeking access have mental capacity**

For simplicity, a decision has been made to integrate the two aspects of control software and run this on the Raspberry Pi processor. This will allow the mandatory questions to be asked of the person about to use the Sarco for their death, and have their verbal answers recorded. The questions that need to be answered are 1) Who are you? 2) Where are you? and 3) Do you know what will happen when you press the activation button inside Sarco? A final question, "Do you wish to proceed?" has been added and a verbal "Yes" activates the mechanism.

It is clear that the questions asked in no way passes as an assessment of mental capacity, but the program can be refined and extended. In the initial stages of use of Sarco#3 the conventional assessment of mental capacity will be carried out by a psychiatrist.

The role of AI in the determination of mental capacity is controversial, even though there is growing evidence that current human assessment is subject to bias and inability to replicate. A recent summary of the Sarco Project in MIT Technology Review referred to what they described as the "messy morality" of letting AI make life and death decisions.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The messy morality of letting AI make life-and-death decisions

Automation can help us make hard choices, but it can't do it alone.

By Will Douglas Heaven

October 13, 2022



EXIT INTERNATIONAL

In a workshop in Rotterdam in the Netherlands, Philip Nitschke—“Dr. Death” or “the Elon Musk of assisted suicide” to some—is overseeing the last few rounds of testing on his new Sarco machine before shipping it to Switzerland, where he says its first user is waiting.

This is the third prototype that Nitschke’s nonprofit, Exit International, has 3D-printed and wired up. Number one has been exhibited in Germany and Poland. “Number two was a disaster,” he says. Now he’s ironed out the manufacturing errors and is ready to launch: “This is the one that will be used.”

- **Development of an implantable switch for those anticipating mental capacity loss.**

This part of the project is essential for those who are experiencing a real or expected decline in mental capacity from dementia or other disease. At present the only strategy offered to address this is the completion of a witnessed advance directive that, in some jurisdictions, allows legal assistance to die even for those with no capacity. This is an unsatisfactory solution.

A programmed implantable switch that can be activated while one has capacity and designed to end life after a preset period, unless reset by the owner, offers an important solution. Currently the project has stalled, beset by a number of practical problems.

For more detail or any questions on any aspects of Sarco Project, visit the website www.sarco.design or email sarcoproject@proton.me

Sarco Project

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