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HBPF: a Home Blood Pressure Framework with SLA guarantees to follow up hypertensive patients

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Hypertension or high blood pressure is a condition on the rise. Not only does it affect the elderly but is also increasingly spreading to younger sectors of the population. Treating it involves exhaustive monitoring of patients. A tool adapted to the particular requirements of hypertension can greatly facilitate monitoring and diagnosis. This paper presents HBPF, an efficient cloud-based Home Blood Pressure Framework. This allows hypertensive patients to communicate with their health-care centers, thus facilitating monitoring for both patients and clinicians. HBPF provides a complete, efficient, and cross-platform framework to follow up hypertensive patients with an SLA guarantee. Response time below one second for 80,000 requests and 28% increase in peak throughput going from one to 3 virtual machines were obtained. In addition, a mobile app (BP) for Android and iOS with a user-friendly interface is also provided to facilitate following up hypertensive patients. Among them, between 54% and 87% favorably evaluated the tool. BP can be downloaded for free from the website Hesoft Group repository (<http://www.hesoftgroup.eu>).

1 HBPF: a Home Blood Pressure Framework with SLA
2 guarantees to follow up hypertensive patients

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13 **Abstract**

14 Hypertension or high blood pressure is a condition on the rise. Not only
15 does it affect the elderly but is also increasingly spreading to younger sectors
16 of the population. Treating it involves exhaustive monitoring of patients.
17 A tool adapted to the particular requirements of hypertension can greatly
18 facilitate monitoring and diagnosis.

This paper presents HBPF, an efficient cloud-based Home Blood Pressure Framework. This allows hypertensive patients to communicate with their health-care centers, thus facilitating monitoring for both patients and clinicians. HBPF provides a complete, efficient, and cross-platform framework to follow up hypertensive patients with an SLA guarantee. Response time below one second for 80 000 requests and 28% increase in peak throughput going from one to three virtual machines were obtained. In addition, a mobile app (BP) for Android and iOS, with a user-friendly interface, is also provided to facilitate following up hypertensive patients. Among them, between 54% and 87% favorably evaluated the tool. BP can be downloaded for free from the website Hesoft Group repository (<http://www.hesoftgroup.eu>).

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19 1. Introduction

20 Hypertension is one of the most important risk factors in cardiovascular
21 diseases, the leading cause of death worldwide [1]. It affects about 20% of
22 the adult population, a percentage that increases with age [2].

23 Home blood pressure (*HBP*) consists of patients taking readings at home
24 and registering these using a digital device. The patients then send the
25 readings to a health professional who is responsible for taking appropriate
26 action [3].

27 In a recent scientific article, the American Heart Association concluded
28 that *HBP* monitoring should become a routine component of blood pressure
29 measurement in the majority of patients with known or suspected hyperten-
30 sion [3]. *HBP* readings may also be better predictors of cardiovascular and
31 renal outcomes than surgery readings [4, 5]. Furthermore, *HBP* readings
32 provide a more accurate assessment of true blood pressure than alternative
33 measurement methods, such as surgery blood pressure or rapid titration of
34 antihypertensive therapy. They also avoid the white-coat syndrome and fa-
35 cilitate the identification of masked hypertension, leading to a greater patient
36 involvement in managing hypertension, a condition that is typically asymp-
37 tomatic [6].

38 Having ways to monitor *HBP* in a continuous and rigorous way, with a
39 fluid communication between patient and doctor may be crucial in ensuring
40 satisfactory control of blood pressure, which is currently a great challenge.
41 Information and communication technology (ICT) can play an important role
42 in achieving this monitoring capabilities [7, 8]. In this context, we developed
43 and present HBPF (Home Blood Pressure Framework). HBPF is made up of
44 two parts, the HM (Hypertension Module) server and the BP (Blood Pressure
45 monitoring) mobile app.

46 HBPF provides high performance for a given SLA (Service Level Agree-
47 ment). An SLA is a contract negotiated and agreed between a customer
48 and a service provider for which a customer only pays for the resources and
49 services used according to negotiated performance requirements at a given
50 price [8, 11]. Throughput is one of the most important performance metric
51 in a cloud-computing context [8, 11]. It was also the performance parameter
52 chosen in this work to fix the SLA.

53 Frameworks such as HBPF generate large amounts of data that need to
54 be continuously stored, processed, and available. This require the use of
55 cloud computing services [12]. Earlier versions of the concept underlying

56 HBPF [8, 11, 13] were tested in a private cloud-based server, before mov-
57 ing the HM into a real-world cloud environment. These applications used
58 SMS communications between clinicians and patients. This was limiting in
59 many ways. The current platform uses Internet communication, providing
60 physicians with access to standard medical records and allowing them to
61 write reports and to follow up and communicate (i.e. charting and sending
62 videos) with patients by means of HBPF. Efforts were made to design a scal-
63 able framework when the number of both patients and hospitals increased
64 by providing Service Level Agreement (SLA) guarantees [13, 14, 15, 16, 17].

65 The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 details the
66 related work addressing the problem of tele-monitoring hypertensive patients.
67 In Section 3.1, we present HM. Section 3.2 is devoted to explaining the op-
68 eration and functionality of the BP app. This app and its performance is
69 evaluated in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 outlines the main conclusions and
70 future work.

71 2. Related Work

72 There is a potentially important role for novel techniques to lower er-
73 rors in collecting blood pressure readings, especially in primary care, where
74 management of hypertension mainly takes place [6, 18]. One such techniques
75 is mHealth - health care and public health practice supported by mobile
76 devices [19].

77 Earlier work identified 60 web sites that provided functionality to manage
78 and present home blood-pressure readings. Out of these, 20 could be freely
79 used. A comparison between these 20 web sites was carried out between June
80 and August 2009 [20]. The results showed that none of these 20 web sites
81 were directly linked to common electronic medical records. In addition, none
82 of them provided any tools for sending alert messages in any format.

83 Studies have shown the positive impact of mHealth on adherence-related
84 behavior among patients. For example, short message service (SMS) ap-
85 pointment reminders have led to an increase in attendance of HIV [21], tu-
86 berculosis [22], and quitting tobacco patients [11, 13]. Patient-physician
87 short messaging through a telemedicine system was also tested as a means
88 to improve control of hypertension in the follow-up of medium-to-low-risk
89 patients in primary care [23]. A control group (CG) recorded the data on
90 paper and could only deliver it to their GP personally in routine visits. This
91 study showed that 50% of the telemedicine-enabled patients strictly adhered

92 to the treatment protocol, versus 25% in the CG. This suggests that more
 93 flexible and continuous ways of interaction and follow up of patients might
 94 have a greater impact in treatment adherence.

95 A study among 107 mHealth articles assessed the role of adherence of
 96 patients to chronic diseases management [24]. 40.2% (43/107) of studies
 97 used SMS exclusively and 23.4% used specialized software or a smartphone
 98 app. These programs focused mainly on a combination of devices, such as an
 99 electrocardiogram or a BP monitor. As a conclusion, the authors suggested
 100 that future mHealth tools need to provide optimal user-interfaces, or targeted
 101 motivational messages.

102 With all this in mind, we designed and implemented HBPF to include a
 103 flexible and user friendly interface that provides motivational messages to the
 104 patients and enable immediate and real-time communication between patient
 105 and physician by means of the BP app. In addition, the app provides self-
 106 monitoring, reading sampling, charts, reports, tips, and advice, in line with
 107 other existing hypertension apps (see Table 1, for a comparison of the main
 108 features between the various apps). However, with the exception of BP, none
 109 of the apps features on-line physician support for the patient, chat between
 110 physician and patient, or broadcasting communication among a group of
 111 patients. In addition, BP is the only app available for both, iOS and Android
 112 operating systems.

app	DC	NC	Charts	RH	AB	AP	OS
<i>BP Lite</i>	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	iOS
<i>iBP</i>	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	iOS
<i>IBPTouch</i>	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	iOS
<i>BPMonitor</i>	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	iOS
BP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	iOS/Android
<i>iCare BP Monitor</i>	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Android
<i>BP Watch</i>	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Android
<i>Finger BP Prank</i>	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Android

Table 1: Comparison between BP with other similar hypertension apps. app: Application name. DC: Doctor Chat (direct chatting with the physician). NC: Nearby centers (provides information about the distance to specialized centers). Charts: graphical evolution Charts. RH: Readings' History. AB: Automatic sampling of the Blood Pressure by means of an external device. AP: Automatic sampling of the pulse rates by means of an external device. OS: Operating System.

113 HBPF provides a means to communicate across a wide range of platforms
 114 and devices with a doctor, as does *HealthTap*. In addition, HBPF provides a
 115 complete, efficient, and cross-platform framework to follow up hypertensive
 116 patients with an SLA guarantee. Furthermore, the transparent architecture
 117 of HBPF was designed to facilitate the involvement of additional third par-
 118 ties, and the integration with existing healthcare systems, while providing
 119 ad-hoc adaptation of monitoring parameters to each individual, in a similar
 120 way to [25].

121 3. HBPF

122 Fig. 1 summarizes the overall operation of HBPF. First of all, patients
 123 send their readings with the BP app from a smart phone to the server (1),
 124 via Internet (2).

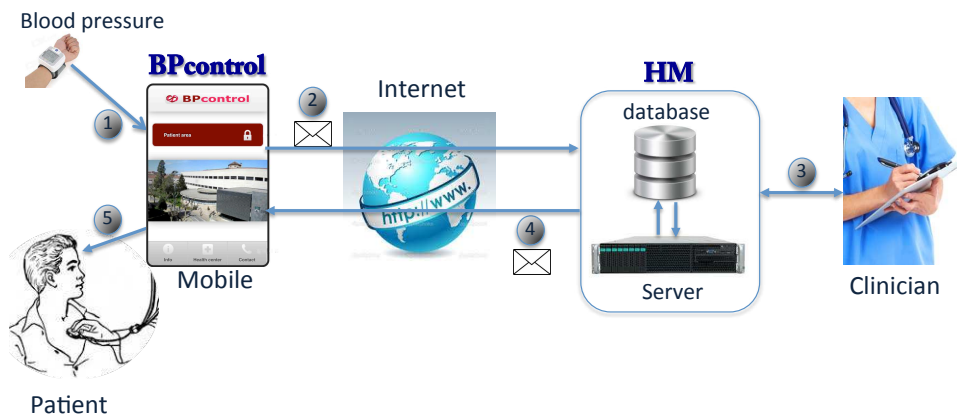


Figure 1: HBPF operation.

125 On receiving a message, the server redirects it to the cloud-based HM. HM
 126 is responsible for checking and saving the readings in a database. Clinicians
 127 can inspect the patients' readings from the database (3). Next, depending
 128 on the data and the criteria specified by the clinicians, HM responds to the
 129 patient's mobile with another message through the server (4 and 5). HM
 130 also provides additional facilities to follow up hypertensive patients.

131 The main objective of the BP app is to extend the communication systems
 132 of the HM tool, adding the most widely used communication functionalities
 133 for smartphones. These include instant messaging (chat), among others. In
 134 this way, patients participate actively in controlling their disease and follow
 135 their medical evolution, communicating with the medical team in real time.

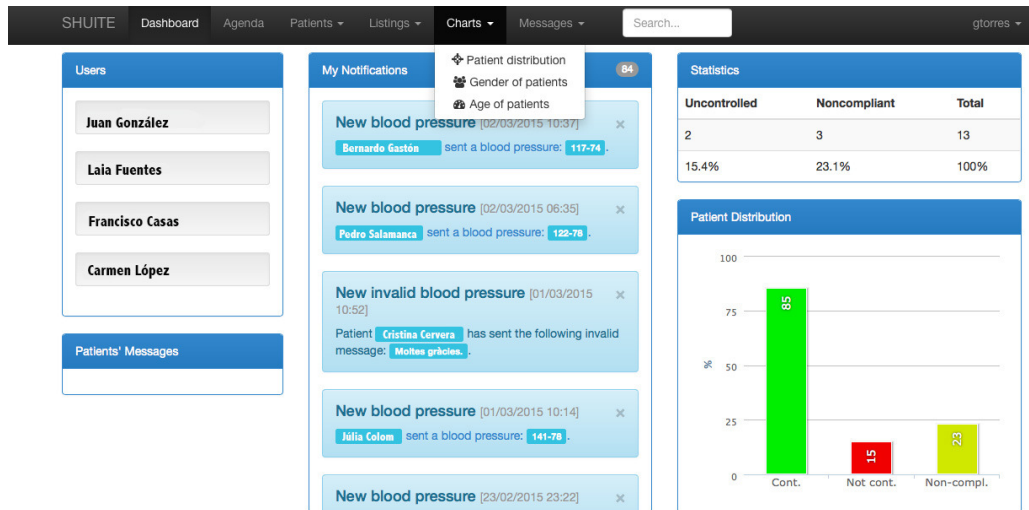


Figure 2: HM. The names that appear in the figure are invented.

137 The Hypertension Module (HM) (see Fig. 2) was designed for collect-
 138 ing and managing data from hypertensive patients. Its functions are to
 139 record and print/display measurement statistics, show the evolution of pa-
 140 tients graphically using charts, provide instant messaging tools (i.e. chat),
 141 aid clinicians with diagnose, and generate alerts or suggestions for treatment,
 142 patient monitoring, medication and nutrition, among others.

143 One of the main features of HM is that it plots patients' readings (systole
 144 and diastole blood pressures and pulse). These readings can be registered
 145 automatically by means of the BP app or manually by the clinicians. HM
 146 automatically calculates the mean values for each day, showing an overall
 147 average value per day in the plot. HM performs a data verification check,
 148 in order to avoid incorrect or invalid measurements, such as negative or
 149 physically implausible values.

150 HM allows target limits from both systole and diastole blood pressures to
 151 be established individually depending on the characteristics of each patient.
 152 If these limits are exceeded, an alert is shown on the main page of the HM
 153 tool, so that clinicians can act quickly and, if needed, intervene or send an
 154 alert message to the patient.

155 HM is currently designed to communicate with the patients through an
 156 Internet connection (via a smartphone with the BP app). This somewhat

157 determines the design of the architecture, currently made up of a server and
158 a database (see Fig. 1). In order to increase the reliability and availability
159 of the overall system, the server can contain multiple processing units, like
160 processors, cores, or Virtual Machines. As the current web servers are usually
161 mounted on cloud systems, “VMs” is the terminology used from here on. An
162 analysis of the performance provided by the server according to the number
163 of VMs is performed in the results section (Sec. 4).

164 The clinician is responsible for registering the patient in the HM tool.
165 Once registration is done, the patient must send the blood pressure mea-
166 sured at home through BP on a weekly or biweekly basis, depending on the
167 requirements established by the doctor. This design feature facilitates future
168 deployment of personalized medicine approaches to the treatment and follow
169 up of hypertensive patients.

170 According to the personalized monitoring plan of each patient, the system
171 periodically reminds the patient to send their blood pressure readings. The
172 system monitors that the data format and values it receives are appropriate,
173 before recording them and sending a message to the BP app. The contents
174 of the message depend on the information entered by the medical team and
175 on the readings provided by the patients.

176 3.1.1. *HM Architecture*

177 The cloud-based architecture of HM scales easily with increasing number
178 of patients, physicians, and hospitals. This is done by using the SLA to
179 adjust the number of available Virtual Machines (VMs, widely used in cloud
180 computing environments) and the number of requests entering the module
181 (see [14, 16, 17, 13] for more information).

182 The current HM architecture is made up of 2 hosts (nodes), each with
183 one AMD Opteron 6100 processor of 12 cores running at 2.1GHz (see Fig 3).
184 We plan to add more hosts as the system grows. Note that nodes can be
185 different, conforming a heterogeneous framework. All the software technolo-
186 gies used to implement HBPF were carefully selected with several criteria in
187 mind. First, they had to be open-source, in order to facilitate future shared
188 development of the apps. In addition, these technologies had to be robust,
189 efficient, and be widely deployed and supported. VMs are deployed across
190 the hosts on top of the OpenStack². OpenStack is an open source Cloud plat-

²OpenStack. <http://www.openstack.org>

191 form that allows to manage and deploy large networks of Virtual Machines.
 192 All the VMs run Ubuntu GNU/Linux 3.2.0-41-virtual x86_64. We believe
 193 in a distributed design because the degree of administrative and geographic
 194 scalability increases with the number of hosts.

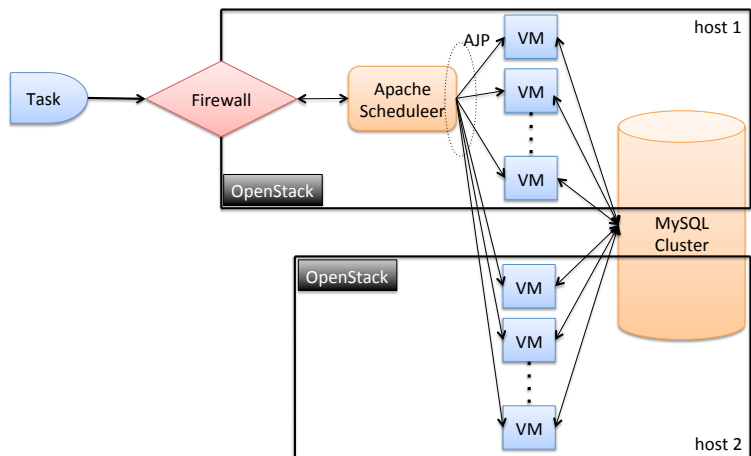


Figure 3: HM architecture.

195 The scheduler is mapped into a VM with 512MB RAM and 1 core in host
 196 1. It is implemented using the *Scheduler* of *Apache Tomcat 7*. The rest of
 197 VMs, that service the requesting tasks, are provided with 4GB and 2 cores.
 198 These VMs are the computing VM nodes, where the HM module copies (each
 199 performing the same operation) are deployed on top of *Apache Tomcat*³, an
 200 open-source web server developed by the Apache Software Foundation (ASF).

201 Task scheduling determines which VM executes the tasks. VM consol-
 202 idation instead determines the mapping of VMs to hosts. The HM task
 203 scheduling and VM consolidation follows a Round-robin policy, which states
 204 that tasks (VMs) are assigned to VMs (hosts) by following a circular ring
 205 ordering.

206 All VMs are configured with the *AJP* (*Apache JServ Protocol - Apache*
 207 *Tomcat Connector*) protocol enabled, which is used by the scheduler to com-

³Apache Tomcat. <http://tomcat.apache.org/>

208 municate with the nodes. AJP is a protocol that can proxy inbound requests
209 from a web server (Apache HTTP server) to an application server (Tomcat).

210 The database is implemented using a *MySQL Cluster*⁴, a technology
211 that provides shared-nothing clustering and auto-sharding for the MySQL
212 database management system. The database is distributed between the
213 hosts (nodes) making up the cloud framework. The *MySQL Cluster* is im-
214 plemented with 2 VMs with 4GB RAM and 2 cores (of two different hosts).
215 Having multiple computing and data-sites ensures a high degree of load and
216 administrative scalability and reliability.

217 3.2. BP

218 BP is designed to update and expand the current system of communi-
219 cation with the HM tool, offering an application that was not previously
220 available for smart phones. BP is a user-friendly app that extends the HM
221 services to Android and iOS smartphones.

222 3.2.1. BP Design

223 Currently, there are many alternative technologies for developing applica-
224 tions for mobile devices. An important design requirement was that the ap-
225 plication should be compatible with all the major platforms Android and iOS.
226 Because of this, the BP app was implemented using HTML, CSS, Javascript,
227 JQuery Mobile and PhoneGap⁵.

228 PhoneGap is an open-source development tool for creating cross-platform
229 mobile applications with countless libraries available for use. PhoneGap has
230 APIs to control I/O devices efficiently (such as cameras, GPS, databases, file
231 system, etc.) in a similar way to those obtained with native code. Phonegap
232 currently supports the two mainstream platforms (Android and iOS).

233 The features that retrieve information from HM need to establish a con-
234 nection by means of web services. This ensures low data capacity require-
235 ments and avoids legal problems, as medical data is only stored in HM instead
236 of in each individual smartphone. However, this introduces a low penalty in
237 obtaining the required information remotely, although it does not signifi-
238 cantly affect the user experience. We created ad hoc web services, which are
239 used to exchange data in JSON format between the clients (BP instances)
240 and the server (HM).

⁴MySQL Cluster. <https://www.mysql.com/products/cluster/>

⁵PhoneGap. <http://phonegap.com>.

241 3.2.2. *BP Operation*

242 The BP app can be used to register patients, edit their profile, download
243 or upload data regarding blood pressure and pulse readings from/to the HM
244 server, visualize informative videos uploaded by the clinicians, analyze pa-
245 tient trends by plotting and listing the evolution of the patients' state and
246 readings, and provide information about collaborating hospitals. Finally BP
247 can be used for chatting (instant messaging) between patients and clinicians.
248 Whenever required, a patient can easily ask the doctor a question through
249 the chat window.

250 The application also helps the patients with useful advice. Once the
251 blood pressures and the pulse have been sent, the app immediately shows
252 the results of the analysis (done in HM) through a traffic light indicating the
253 status of the patient. In addition, a short message indicates medical advice.
254 The medical advice depends on the results of the analysis of the readings.

255 There are three possible states (light colors) and three associated mes-
256 sages:

257 **Good (green).** Everything was fine. Remember to keep measuring and
258 sending your pressure readings.

259 **Regular (yellow).** Do not forget, salt-free diet. Remember to take the
260 medication and do some physical activity.

261 **Bad (red).** We have seen your records, do not worry. We will contact you
262 to bring your next clinical appointment forward.

263 BP can show a graphic evolution of the patients' measurements. Different
264 types of visualization can be chosen. By clicking *global*, the plot of the
265 blood pressure (Fig 4) appears. The *morning* and *afternoon* buttons separate
266 the samples by these times of day. Start and finish dates can be selected.
267 Alternatively, 1, 3 and 6 months selectors are available.

268 **4. Results**

269 Here we report a series of benchmark experiments used to evaluate the
270 performance and efficiency of HBPF. We benchmark HM and the BP app
271 separately and present the results in sections 4.1 and 4.2 respectively.

272 The main performance criteria by which the HM server and the BP app
273 should be evaluated are only partially overlapping. Because of this we sep-
274 arately evaluated the server and the app. For the HM server we evaluated

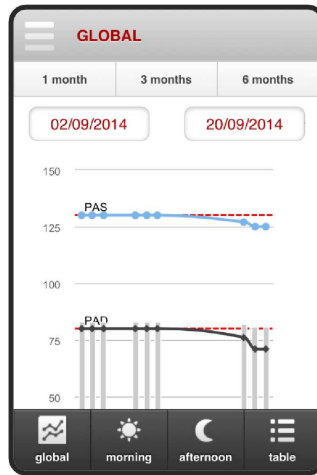


Figure 4: Consultation readings for blood pressure.

275 response time, throughput, and scalability. For the BP app, we evaluated
 276 startup time, communication time and usability.

277 4.1. HM

278 4.1.1. Testbed

279 Experiments on the HM tool were carried out on 5 Virtual Machines
 280 [VM1 ... VM5] deployed over OpenStack, installed on a host with 1 AMD
 281 Opteron processor with 12 cores running at 2.1 GHz each. To emulate VM
 282 heterogeneity, we set VM1 ... VM5 with 4GB RAM and 2 cores.

283 Application stress tests via HTTP requests were performed using the
 284 Apache JMeter⁶ tool, which measures performance and functional behavior.
 285 These requests simulated patients consulting or introducing their data and
 286 clinicians using HM.

287 The effect of number of simultaneous requests on HBPF performance was
 288 tested by systematically varying the number of users. There were generated
 289 100 requests per user. All users would be performing their requests within
 290 a single 50 sec. period. The time between user requests was constant and
 291 therefore these requests were uniformly distributed in the 50 second test
 292 interval.

⁶JMeter. <http://jmeter.apache.org/>

293 The performance metric we used was the Response Time and Through-
 294 put, as these parameters are widely used for measuring system efficiency.
 295 Throughput was also the parameter chosen to fix the SLA.

296 4.1.2. Response Time

297 Testing the response time of the application was done using all five avail-
 298 able VMs. Fig. 5 summarizes the response time of the system in terms of
 299 the median, average and 90% Line when the number of users increased from
 300 200 to 800. The 90% Line (or 90th percentile) is the value below which 90%
 301 of the samples were processed in less than the time specified on the y-axis.
 302 This metric is more meaningful than the median or average value in terms of
 303 SLA (Service Level Agreement). Although the system starts to overload at
 304 80,000 requests (i.e. 800 users), the average and median response time still
 305 remains below 1 second (the users will not notice a lack of interactivity with
 306 the system). Obviously, worsser results were obtained for the 90% Line (1,7
 307 s).

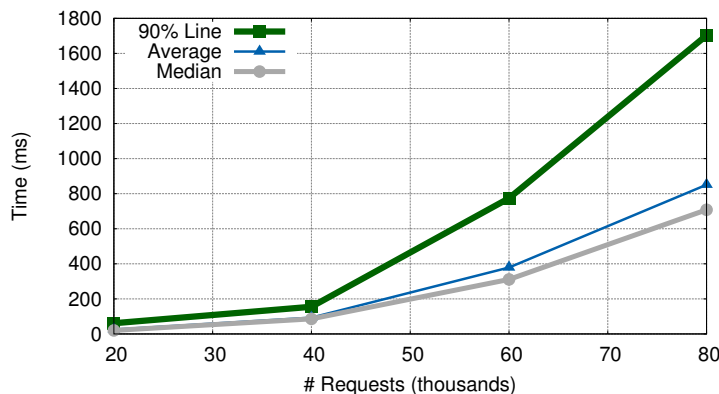


Figure 5: Evolution of response time (average, median and 90% Line).

308 4.1.3. Throughput

309 Another measure of efficiency is throughput (TR), which is defined as the
 310 number of requests served per unit of time:

$$TR = \frac{\text{number of requests}}{\text{time}} \quad (1)$$

311 Here, we benchmark the effect of changing the number of available VMs
 312 on the TR and the number of users from 50 to 800. Fig. 6 compares the

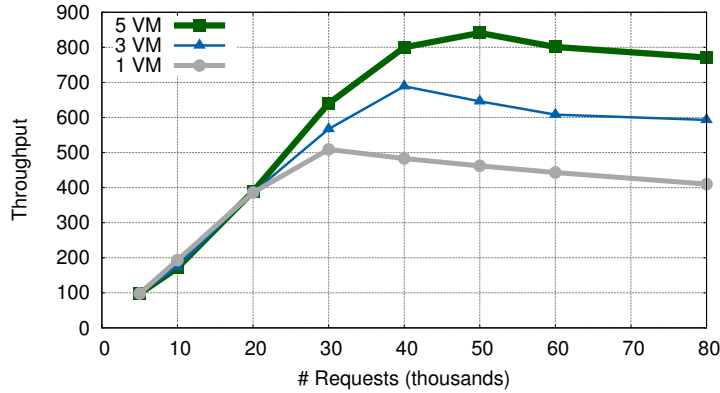


Figure 6: Evolution of system throughput when using 1, 3 and 5 VMs.

313 TR of the system when we use one (VM1), three (VM1-VM3), or five VMs
 314 (VM1-VM5). Fig. 6 summarizes the results.

315 A general feature of the system’s response is that TR increases linearly
 316 with the number of requests, until it peaks at approximately 40,000 requests
 317 (30,000 for 1 VM). After this threshold, TR performance decreases slightly
 318 and the SLA is not guaranteed. We note that the SLA should be fixed
 319 according to the required TR, depending on the number of requests and
 320 the number of VMs available. This behaviour is consistent with previous
 321 simulations of a similar model system, using an approach based on queuing
 322 theory[15, 16].

323 Going from one to three VMs leads to an increase in peak TR of 28,5%.
 324 In contrast, going from three to five VMs leads to an increase in peak TR
 325 of approximately 16,8%. This suggests that peak relative performance in-
 326 crement decreases every time additional VMs are activated. Internal tests
 327 suggest that this loss was due to the delay introduced by the remote commu-
 328 nication between VMs located in different cores, which is a known frequent
 329 bottleneck in distributed computing applications.

330 Thus, as was the case in the simulated system [15, 16], we face a situation
 331 where our system overloads, leading to a significant increase in the response
 332 time and a decrease in TR. However, in contrast with the simulated system,
 333 adding more VMs to the real HBPF system only partially solves the problem,
 334 and a law of diminishing returns is observed with an increase in number of
 335 VMs. Overall, these experiments suggests that the most efficient strategy for
 336 distributing work between VMs allocated to HBPF is to first deploy work to

337 local VMs. When these are saturated, work should then be sent to remote
338 VMs.

339 4.1.4. Scalability

340 We also investigated the scalability of the system in its cloud environ-
341 nment by using an event-driven simulator to test the behaviour of that en-
342 vironment. We use the CloudSim 3.0.2 software [26] in these tests because
343 it allowed us to easily emulate the HBPF architecture presented and evalu-
344 ated in sections 3.1.1 and 4.1 respectively. CloudSim allows the behaviour of
345 the AMD Opteron 6,100 (the one chosen for this simulation) to be emulated.
346 The CloudSim task scheduling and VM consolidation followed a Round-robin
347 policy. As we chose the same processor and scheduling policies as the HM
348 architecture (see section 3.1.1), the results obtained in the simulation should
349 be directly applicable to the real system.

350 Fig. 7 shows the system behavior when scaling it by increasing the num-
351 ber of VMs and hosts. VMs were made up of 2 cores and 4GB each. As
352 in section 4.1, one host was made up of one processor. The simulation en-
353 vironment was carried out by executing 1,000 tasks with a size of 100,000
354 instructions each. Further experiments varying these parameters gave pro-
355 portional results.

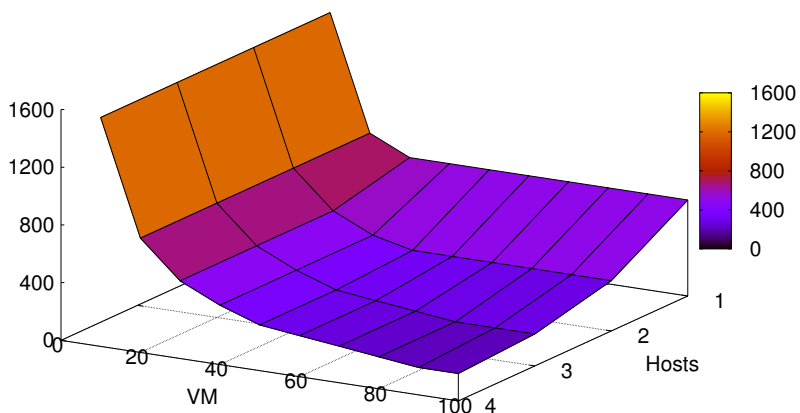


Figure 7: Execution times depending on the number of VMs and the number of hosts.

356 We can appreciate that increasing the number of VMs and hosts signifi-

357 cantly decreases the total execution time (in time units) of the overall tasks.
 358 Fig. 7 shows that by adding VMs, the performance approaches asymptoti-
 359 cally to a limit where it does not have enough computational resources (RAM,
 360 CPUs, etc.. making up the hosts) to map the tasks, and so the execution
 361 time stabilizes. Similar behavior occurs when adding more hosts without
 362 adding more VMs.

363 4.2. BP

364 4.2.1. Performance

365 Typically, two important bottlenecks in application performance are the
 366 start up of the app and the operational processes in which that app accesses
 367 Internet.

368 BP was installed and tested on smartphones and tablets running modern
 369 versions of Android and iOS. The devices and operating systems used to
 370 verify the correct operation of BP are listed in Table 2. This table shows
 371 the elapsed time of the start up for BP. These times were the average of 3
 372 independent measurements.

Device	Operating System	BP start up time
Samsung Galaxy S2	Android v. 4.2.2	10.583
Samsung Galaxy S3	Android v. 4.3	10.121
Nexus 5	Android v. 5.1.1	9.638
Ipad 2	iOS v. 8.4	10.346
Iphone 6	iOS v. 8.4	9.949

Table 2: Performance comparison between devices (in ms).

373 The cross-reference APIs used by PhoneGap introduced a considerable
 374 penalisation in the BP start up time (10 ms). However, the application
 375 performed well in all the tested devices. In all cases, overall response time
 376 fell below one second, which guarantees that the user’s flow of thought is
 377 uninterrupted [27].

378 The communication time sending a chat message to HM was also mea-
 379 sured. To do so, we computed the average time for all Android and iOS
 380 devices. We tested two types of connections, WiFi (with 100 Mb/s download
 381 and 10 Mb/s upload speed) and 4G Data Internet. Each experiment was
 382 repeated 10 times per device. Communications were very fast, taking on
 383 average 329 ms for WiFi and 861 ms for 4G. WiFi bandwidth was entirely

384 dedicated to communications done using the BP app. This validates the
385 design of the communication mechanism between the app and HM.

386 *4.2.2. Usability*

387 Here we perform a preliminary evaluation of BP’s usability. This was done
388 by asking both, clinicians and patients, to fill in a Google-forms questionnaire.
389 This questionnaire was sent by the HM server to all 90 registered patients
390 and the 3 clinicians of the Clinic hospital of Barcelona. 38 patients and all
391 the clinicians answered it. Table 3 summarizes the results of this evaluation.
392 This table only shows the affirmative answers.

393 Clinicians are highly satisfied with the app and all are convinced of its
394 usefulness and efficiency. In addition, they don’t find its use monotonous. In
395 addition, two of the three clinicians found BP very easy to use. We note that
396 these evaluations are anecdotal and a larger number of clinicians must answer
397 the survey before we can come to a reasonable conclusion about usability of
398 BP from the clinician’s point of view. In terms of user evaluation, we focus
399 more on the feedback from patients than that from clinicians for two reasons.
400 First, patients will be the vast majority of final BP users. Second, we need to
401 obtain input from additional clinicians, given the low number of professionals
402 that answered the survey. Between 54% and 87% of all patients reported full
403 satisfaction with the various aspects of using the BP app, indicating that
404 they are mostly happy with the application. The weakest point we detected
405 was that 39% of the patients found the use of BP monotonous. This is in
406 striking difference with the clinicians that had the opposite opinion. We
407 need to further and specifically understand what the patients found boring
408 in order to improve that aspect of the app.

409 In general, clinicians and patients recognized the usefulness of the app
410 for remote monitoring of hypertensive patients and to reduce traveling costs.
411 We note that we are now in the process of compiling patient and clinician
412 suggestions to help us improve the user-friendliness of the app.

413 **5. Conclusions**

414 This article presents HBPF, an efficient eHealth framework to manage
415 and follow up hypertensive patients. HBPF comes with with SLA guarantees
416 and it can significantly reduce the costs associated with patient travelling.
417 Its efficiency and SLA guarantees are provided by HM, the HBPF server
418 component.

Question	Patients	Clinicians
Would you recommend it?	87	100
It is useful for monitoring hypertension?	73	100
Is it use monotonous?	39	0
Is it easy to use?	79	66.6
Is it useful to reduce the visits to the hospital?	82	100

Table 3: Evaluating the use of BP. Affirmative answers (in %).

419 The use of PhoneGap when implementing BP was a successful decision
420 because it has proven to be a very suitable framework for cross-platform
421 applications, increasing its flexibility and functionality. We tested its perfor-
422 mance in the iOS and Android operating systems on both smartphones and
423 tablets. Despite the difficulties of adapting the interface in some cases, the
424 results achieved were satisfactory.

425 However, the user experience could possibly be improved by using native
426 development due to the fact that PhoneGap has a slightly higher response
427 time than native applications. Accordingly, we are migrating the current ap-
428 plication to native environments for iOS and Android platforms. We expect
429 to improve this aspect, which we assume will be temporary. We will then
430 compare the performance of PhoneGap against native frameworks.

431 Future trends are aimed at testing how the use of this comprehensive and
432 personalized monitoring tool can minimize the risk of heart attacks, strokes
433 and other effects of hypertension. We plan to add a wireless or bluetooth
434 interface to the sampling device without requiring the patient to manually
435 submit the data, thus facilitating automatic data transfer and avoiding tran-
436 scription errors. Moreover, we plan to implement data analytics so we can
437 provide aggregated data to the clinicians in order to detect trends and pat-
438 terns within their patient groups.

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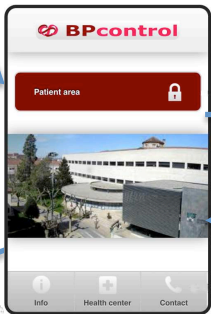
Figure 1(on next page)

HPF operation

Blood pressure



BPcontrol



Mobile

Internet



HM

database



Server



Clinician

1

2



4



3

5

Patient



2

HM. The names that appear in the figure are invented

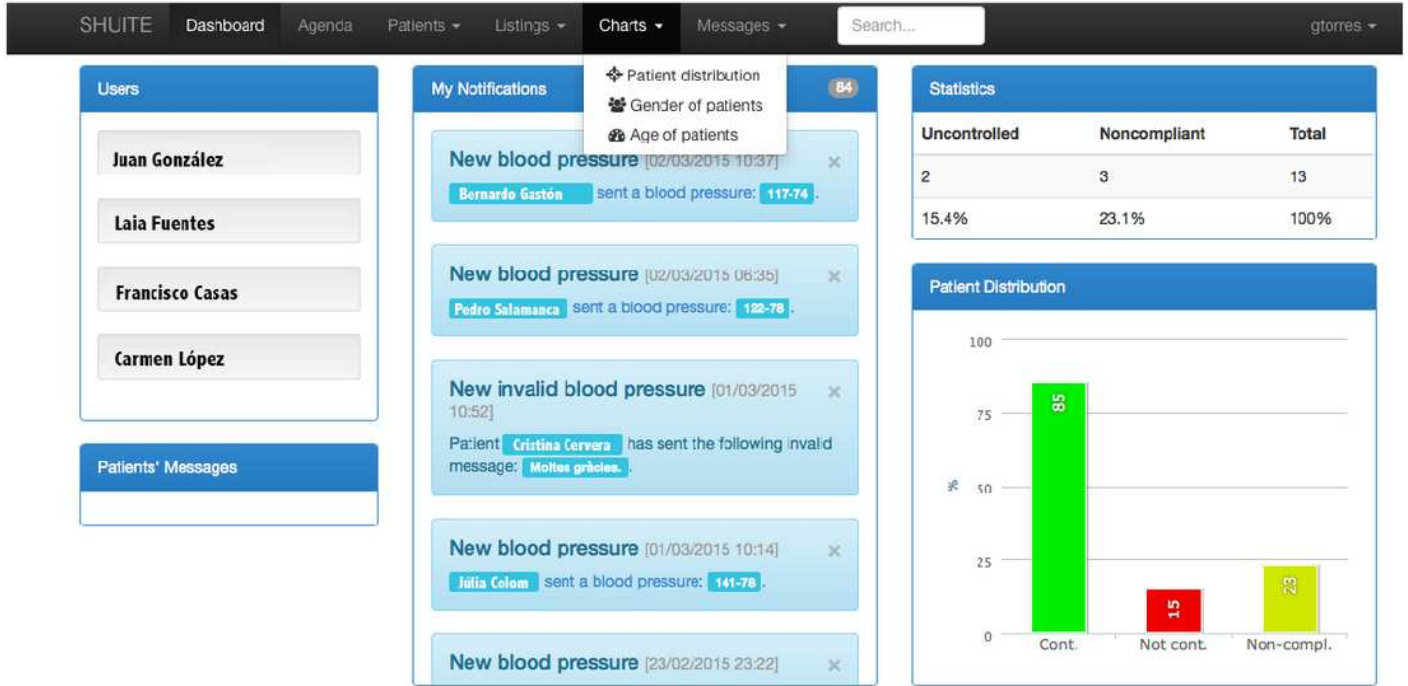
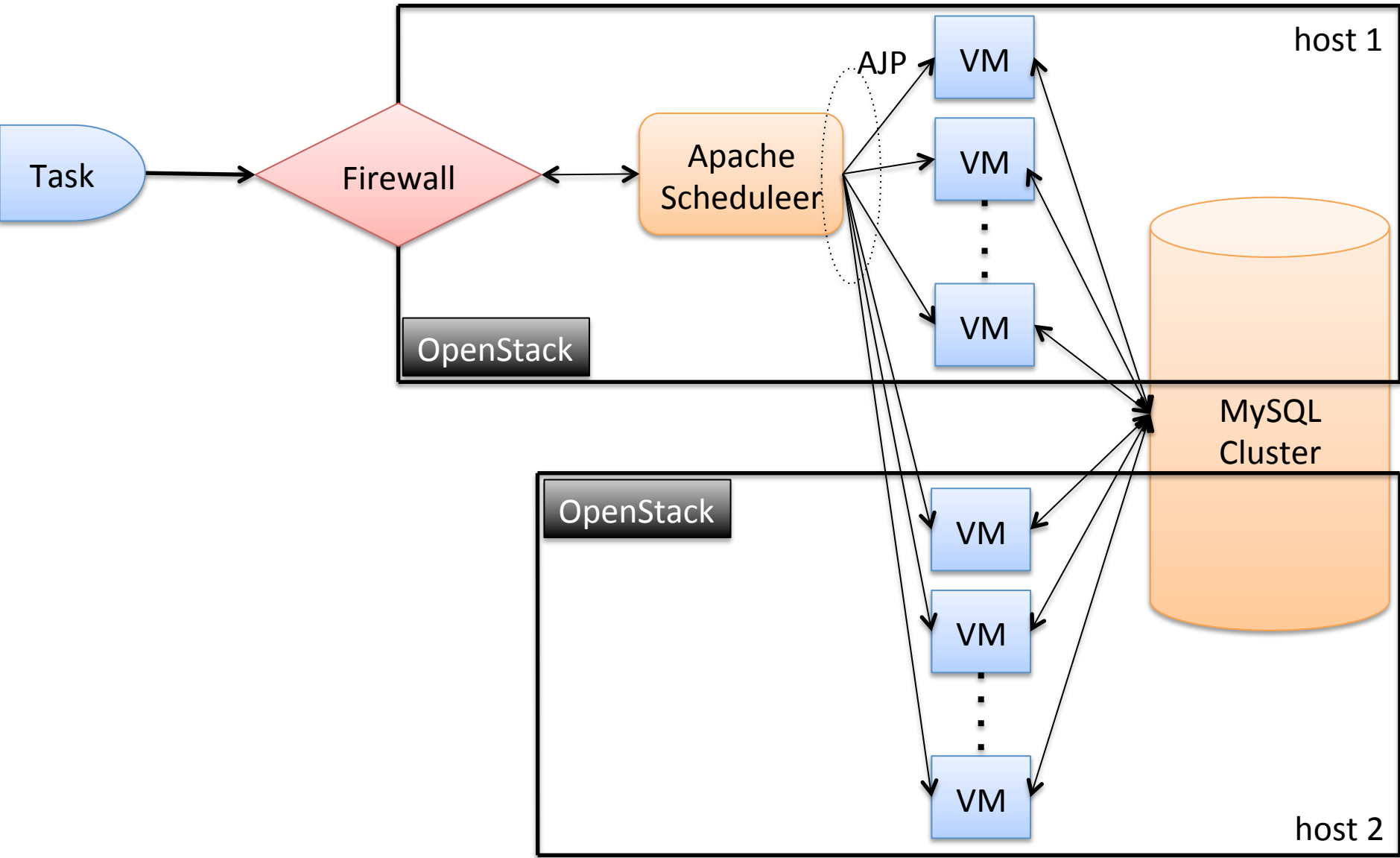


Figure 3(on next page)

HM Architecture



4

Consultation readings



GLOBAL

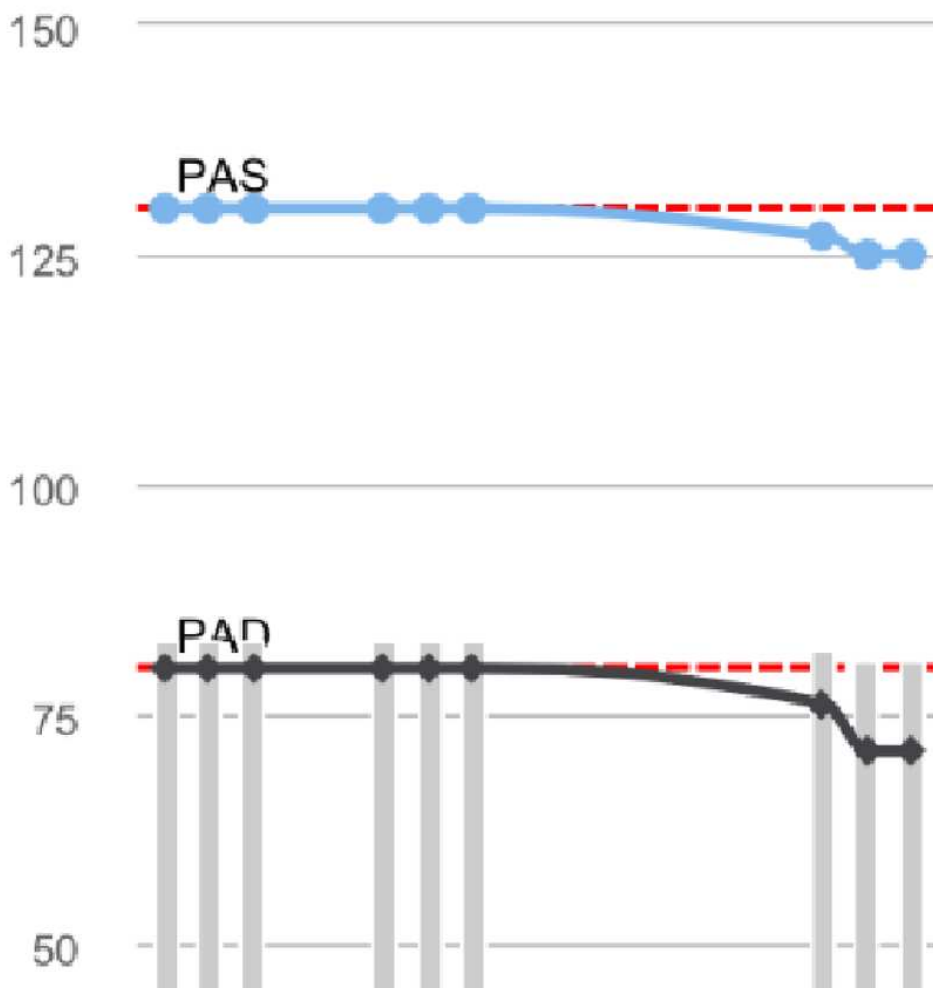
1 month

3 months

6 months

02/09/2014

20/09/2014



global



morning



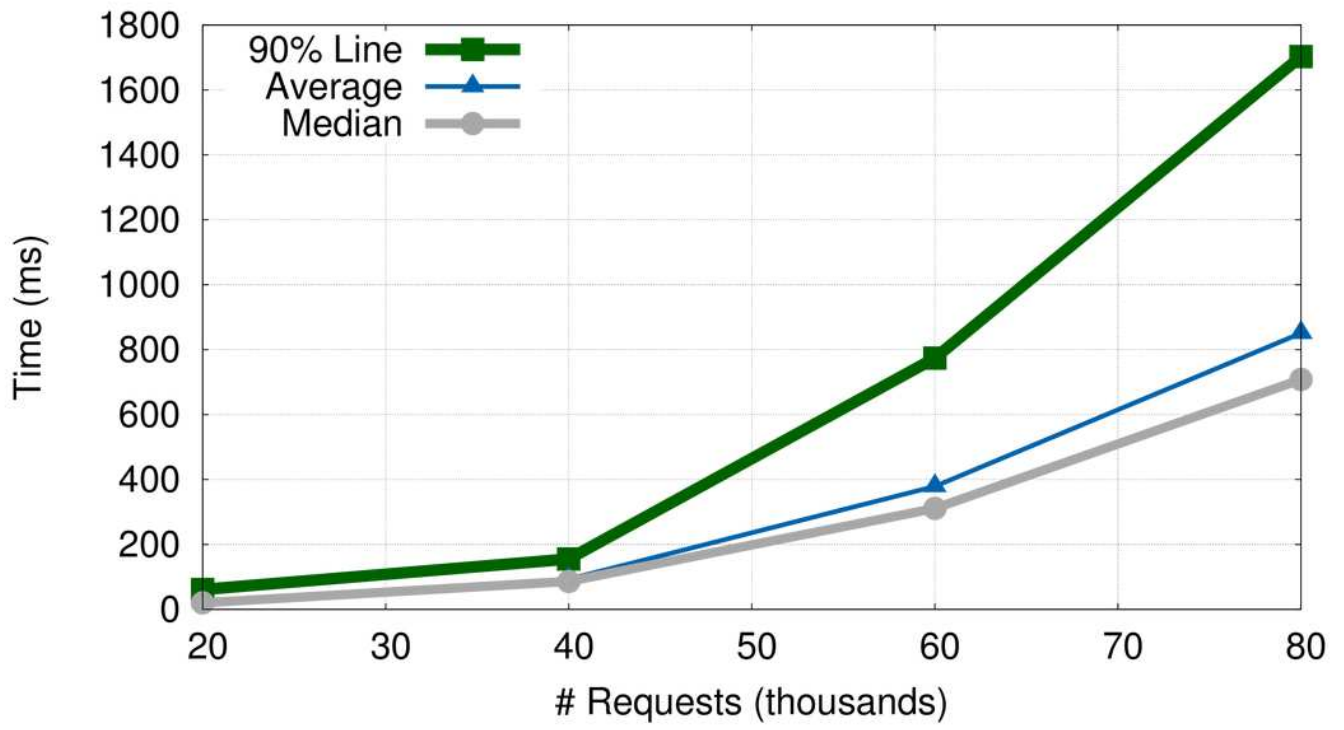
afternoon



table

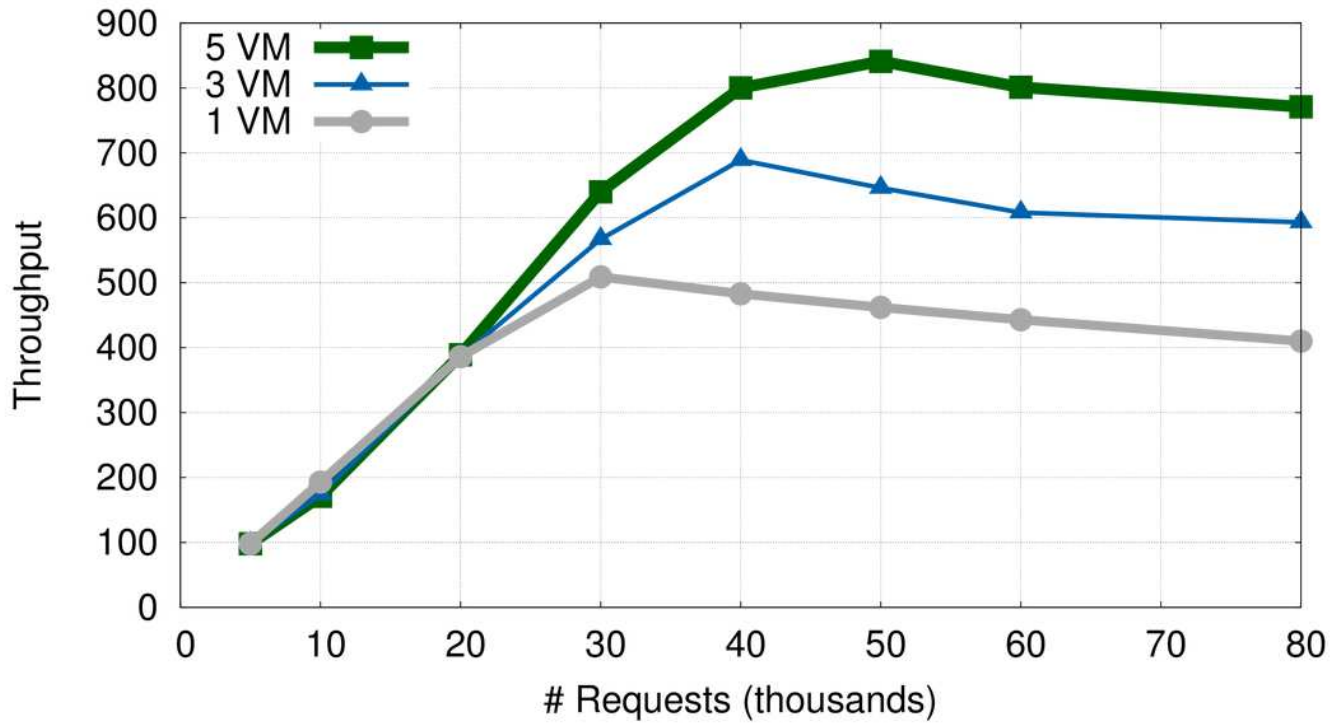
5

response time



6

throughput



7

scalability

