

E-Health in Practice - No. 2 (June 2008)

HealthConnect International



E-Health in Practice

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Produced by HealthConnect International, the E-Health in Practice Bulletin aims to highlight useful tools, resources, and examples of e-health applications that health professionals in developing countries can apply in their own environments. It is also intended to serve as a forum for readers to share resources and experiences. To suggest or contribute ideas or content for future issues of the bulletin, please contact: bulletin@healthconnect-intl.org

To receive regular issues of the E-Health in Practice Bulletin, please subscribe at <http://groups.google.com/group/healthconnect-international> or contact bulletin@healthconnect-intl.org. Archived issues can be found at www.healthconnect-intl.org

In this issue:

The bulletin is organized into departments covering four broad e-health subject areas. Each department includes one or more tools, resources, projects, or opportunities. Future issues of the bulletin will also include a calendar of upcoming conferences, trainings, and events relevant to e-health in developing countries.

E-Health Practice Area No. 1. Evidence-based Practice and Access to Health Research

- Resource: International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP)
- Resource: Healthcare Information For All by 2015 [HIFA2015] Campaign / Community / E-mail Forum
- See also: Opportunity under Practice Area No. 4

E-Health Practice Area No. 2. Information Systems and Electronic Health Records

- Resource: Health IT Bibliography

E-Health Practice Area No. 3. Telemedicine

- Resource: Swinfen Charitable Trust Telemedicine Links
- Project: Latin American Health Care Network - MEDNET

E-Health Practice Area No. 4. Distance Learning and Continuing Medical Education

- Opportunity: Understanding Evidence-based Healthcare: A Foundation for Action [FREE online course]

1. Evidence-based Practice and Access to Health Research

RESOURCE: International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP)

<http://www.inasp.info>

The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) is a UK-based organization that strives to "enable a sustainable network of stakeholders that owns and drives access, use, dissemination and communication of research information."

With this goal in mind, INASP has implemented a great number of projects and information support activities for health professionals worldwide. INASP supports access to full-text publications for professionals and organizations in developing countries, provides training programs at locations all over the world, and supports a wide range of other projects and activities that promote its mission.

For a list of resources and training programs available in your country, the INASP website features a useful navigation bar on the right-side of each page. After selecting your country, you will see all of the full-text databases and other resources available for individuals from that country as well as information about past and future training workshops and other programs being implemented there.

INASP has developed a variety of training programs related to improving access to health research, and many of the valuable training materials they've produced are available for download on their website at:

<http://www.inasp.info/file/634/inasp-training-activities-and-materials.html>

A few of the training courses with downloadable materials include:

- Accessing Information in Developing Countries
- Bandwidth Optimisation
- Developing an Information Literacy Program
- INFORM Electronic Information Resources for Health Researchers and Professionals

A calendar of their training workshops, held all over the world, is available at:

<http://www.inasp.info/file/122/events-calendar.html>

RESOURCE: Healthcare Information For All by 2015 [HIFA2015] Campaign / Community / E-mail Forum

<http://www.hifa2015.org>

<http://www.dgroups.org/groups/hifa2015>

HIFA2015 is a global email discussion group with a focus on the information and learning needs of healthcare providers in developing countries. The main focus is at the local level: households and communities, primary health workers, and health professionals working in district hospital facilities.

HIFA2015 is open to anyone with an interest in improving healthcare in developing countries and membership is free. Its goal is linked with the Millennium Development Goals:

“By 2015, every person worldwide will have access to an informed healthcare provider.”

Why join HIFA2015?

- Be part of a worldwide community dedicated to meet the information and learning needs of healthcare providers
- Learn from others
- Share your experience
- Make new contacts and collaborations
- Let others know about your interests, activities, services, publications
- Find out about funding and training opportunities, useful websites, new publications...
- Collaborate to achieve common goals

Please join today by sending an email to HIFA2015-admin@dgroups.org with your name, organization, and a brief description of your professional interests.

For further details, see www.hifa2015.org or contact the moderator: HIFA2015-admin@dgroups.org

Website for HIFA2015 email group: www.dgroups.org/groups/hifa2015

2. Information Systems and Electronic Health Records

RESOURCE: Health IT Bibliography

http://healthit.ahrq.gov/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=653&&PageID=12790&mode=2&in_hi_userid=3882&cached=true

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) in the United States currently maintains a resource called the “Health IT Bibliography.” This is a collection of carefully selected, high quality resources for health care and information technology professionals searching for information on how health IT can transform care delivery processes and improve quality, safety, and efficiency.

For each category, users will find a mixture of both peer-reviewed articles from professional journals and web-based resources from highly respected health care and IT organizations. Summaries of each item are provided in addition to a link for users to access the full-text resource. Where possible, they have selected resources that are freely available in the public domain. However, some of the articles may require individual or institutional access.

To create the initial bibliography, the AHRQ National Resource Center for Health IT invited nationally recognized experts in each category to review suggested articles within their areas of expertise. The bibliography contains articles on the "state of the art" within health IT, while also summarizing previous research on the benefits and challenges of one or more technologies. Case studies and individual investigations are also included where those articles provide practical advice and details that can be utilized at other health care organizations.

A sample list of some of the topics covered in the Health IT Bibliography are included below:

Adoption Strategies

Clinical Decision Support Systems (CDSS)

Computerized Provider Order Entry (CPOE) Systems

Electronic Health Record (EHR) Systems

Electronic Prescribing (eRx)

Health Information Exchange (HIE)

Standards and Interoperability

3. Telemedicine

RESOURCE: Swinfen Charitable Trust

<http://www.swinfencharitabletrust.com/>

The Swinfen Charitable Trust establishes telemedicine links between hospitals in the developing world and medical specialists who generously give free advice by e-mail. The Trust channels telemedicine teleconsultation requests using digital cameras for clinical images and an automated e-mail server that puts remote hospitals in touch with a team of volunteer medical specialists from many countries who give their advice to the remote hospital free of charge. These specialists cover 130 specialties and sub-specialties, and if a specialty comes up that is not covered, Swinfen endeavours to find a suitable specialist. Consultants give advice to the treating physicians--not to the patients. It is up to the doctor to accept or refuse that advice.

Clinics and hospitals in developing countries may apply to join the Swinfen Telemedicine Links by contacting swinfencharitabletrust@btinternet.com. Applicants should provide information about the hospital or clinic and be committed to the undertaking that poor patients are treated free of charge. On receipt of this information the Trust feeds the details into its secure database and provides the address for their automatic e-mail system.

Once a link has been set up referrals are passed to appropriate medical specialists who respond with advice on diagnosis and recommended treatment. The consultant may also ask for further information in order to supply the requested advice.

Swinfen Charitable Trust has been operating since 1999, and there are 132 hospitals in 35 countries with 383 medical consultants at present. Organisations or lone doctors working in the developing world or areas of conflict are encouraged to approach them for assistance.

To read more:

A review of the first year's experience with an automatic message-routing system for low-cost telemedicine. J Telemed Telecare. 2003;9 Suppl 2:63-5

http://www.uq.edu.au/swinfen/pdf/Swinfen_p63_s2.pdf

Telemedicine and developing countries--successful implementation will require a shared approach J Telemed Telecare. 2001;7 Suppl 1:1-6

http://www.uq.edu.au/swinfen/pdf/Swinfen_1-6.pdf

Design and implementation of an automatic message-routing system for low-cost telemedicine. J Telemed Telecare. 2003;9 Suppl 1:44-7

http://www.uq.edu.au/swinfen/pdf/Swinfen_p44_s.pdf

PROJECT: Latin American Health Care Network – MEDNET

<http://www.e-mednet.com>

The Latin American Health Care Network (or MEDNET) Project strives to develop a medical network that addresses the problems of providing health care from a distance. MEDNET will make use of satellite communication to connect isolated regions of the Amazon and Andes in two different countries: Brazil, Peru. Central referral hospitals in each

country (in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and Huancayo, Peru) will each serve a network of up to seven remote sites.

The medical applications will cover a broad range of specialties, ranging from gynaecology, paediatrics, and cardiology to typical infectious diseases for the region such as malaria and tuberculosis. Patient information extracted from examinations (ultrasounds, EKG tests, bloodwork, and other diagnostic tools) along with the patient's history will be stored in a health care database, together with the demographic information and prescription history.

MEDNET will make use of European standards for the communication and storage and medical data presentation. It will use a software application called "Teleconsult" to support the capture and exchange of clinical images as well as an electronic health record database system.

The project will empower medical doctors to constantly and remotely keep track of their patients with minimum effort, assisted by an intelligent automated infrastructure. Furthermore, remote doctors will be able to share and request assistance from expert doctors located in urban cities.

A sophisticated Collaboration Model will manage the whole service and monitor each patient's medical record, providing an information channel between the medical staff and their patients.

For more details about the MEDNET project, please visit the website at www.e-mednet.com or contact the project dissemination manager, Dr. Wayne Menary at w.menary@geopac.co.uk or the Project Coordinator, Ilias Sachpazidis at ilias.sachpazidis@igc.fraunhofer.de.

4. Distance Learning and Continuing Medical Education

OPPORTUNITY: Understanding Evidence-based Healthcare: A Foundation for Action [FREE online course]

<http://apps1.jhsph.edu/cochrane/CUEwebcourse.htm>

The US Cochrane Center is currently offering a free online course on evidence-based health care. The focus of the course is on skills and knowledge for consumer advocates, but the content is useful for anyone seeking new or renewed competencies in evidence-based medicine.

The expectation is that the course be completed within three months of registration, and that participants will complete course evaluations.

Course Objectives:

The goals of the course are to provide consumer advocates with the tools they need to:

- Successfully navigate the world of medical information,
- Critically appraise research studies,
- Influence the creation of responsible public policy in healthcare, and
- Help the people they serve to make healthcare choices based on the best available evidence.

Course Description:

The course is divided into six modules that illustrate key concepts and provide compelling real-world examples. (The time listed indicates the expected amount of time it will take to go through the module.)

- Module 1. INTRO: What is evidence-based healthcare and why is it important? (45 minutes)
- Module 2. ASK: The importance of research questions in evidence based healthcare. (40 minutes)
- Module 3. ALIGN: Research design, bias and levels of evidence. (1 hour)
- Module 4. ACQUIRE: Searching for healthcare information. Assessing harms and benefits. (1 hour 10

- minutes)
 - Module 5. APPRAISE: Behind the numbers: Understanding healthcare statistics. Science, speed and the search for best evidence. (1 hour 20 minutes)
 - Module 6: APPLY: Critical appraisal and making better decisions for evidence-based healthcare, Determining causality. (1 hour)
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5. Calendar

2008

July

CONFERENCE: Making the eHealth Connection: Global Partnerships, Local Solutions

13 July – 8 August, 2008, Bellagio, Italy

<http://www.ehealth-connection.org>

Making the eHealth Connection: Global Partnerships, Local Solutions is a month-long conference series at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center in Bellagio, Italy. The conference is focused on eight key tracks: interoperability; public health informatics and national health information systems; access to health information and knowledge-sharing; eHealth capacity building; electronic health records; mobile phones and telemedicine; unlocking eHealth markets; national eHealth policies. While attendance of this month-long conference is by invitation only, individuals will be able to participate in virtual forums.

September

CONFERENCE: 5th Regional Coordination Meeting of the Virtual Health Library (VHL)

14-16 September, 2008, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

<http://bvs5.crics8.org/>

The VHL model serves as an integral part of the research, teaching and service systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its objective is to promote equitable access to information and knowledge on health and to develop national and institutional capacities to manage sources and flows of information as basic conditions to increase the efficiency, efficacy, quality and transparency of healthcare systems. The purpose of the Regional Coordination Meeting is to analyze the current progression of the VHL at regional, national, thematic and institutional levels to promote the interchange of progresses, difficulties, solutions and innovations to contribute to the recommendations for the future development.

CONFERENCE: 8th Regional Congress on Health Sciences Information (CRICS)

16-19 September, 2008, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

<http://www.crics8.org>

CRICS is internationally recognized as an innovative congress in scientific and technical information and communication that periodically addresses the regional and international state-of-the-art. It covers the fields of information, knowledge and research evidence management, scientific communication, librarianship, information science, methodologies and information technologies and its applications for the development of health research, education and health care systems. CRICS8 will bring together once more the information and communication producers, intermediaries and users mainly from Latin America and Caribbean but as in the previous congress there will be leaders and representatives from others regions.

October

CONFERENCE: MedNet 2008 – The 13th Annual Symposium on the Internet in Medicine

15-18 October, 2008, St. Petersburg, Russia

<http://www.mednet2008.org/>

MEDNET 2008 is an international meeting aimed at bringing together researchers, developers and users involved in the application of the internet in medicine, starting either with a medical or technological background.

November

CONFERENCE: World of Health IT 08 Conference & Exhibition: Connecting Leaders in Technology and Healthcare
4-6 November, 2008, Bella Centre, Copenhagen, Denmark

<http://www.worldofhealthit.org>

This conference will focus on the role and impact health IT has on the health sector in Europe and other parts of the world, including the Middle East and Africa. The educational sessions will primarily address experiences from deployed services, and focus on proven benefits in quality and efficiency. The participants will also discuss the challenges faced by the early adopters. The demonstration activities will give unique insight into the practical aspects of IT systems and their connectivity.

2009

CONFERENCE: Med-e-Tel – The International Educational and Networking Forum for eHealth, Telemedicine and Health ICT

1-3 April, 2009, Luxexpo, Luxembourg

<http://www.medetel.lu/index.php>

Med-e-Tel focuses on ehealth and telemedicine applications and a wide range of other medical ICT applications and on the convergence of information and communication technology with medical applications, which lead to higher quality of care, cost reductions, workflow efficiency, and widespread availability of healthcare services.

Call for participation

Have you developed any resources (for example, educational materials, software applications, networks) that would be valuable to share with others? Have you been involved in any e-health projects that provide useful lessons learned or models that others can follow? Please send any ideas or suggestions for items to include in future issues of this bulletin to bulletin@healthconnect-intl.org.