The contribution of Chain of TRUST to advancing our understanding of the users' perspective on telehealth

Nicola Bedlington, EPF Director
EPF eHealth Seminar for patient leaders, Brussels, 23 January 2013

Objectives of the Project

1. Knowledge gathering

To improve available knowledge of the specific views - needs, perceptions on the added value and concerns - among patients and health professionals with regard to telehealth services

2. Raising awareness and understanding

To increase awareness and understanding of users' perspective on telehealth amongst patients' and health professionals' organisations and health authorities at European and Member State level

Chain of TRUST

Users' knowledge of telehealth and current and potential use

- Poor knowledge and experience of telehealth

- Lack of understanding of telehealth, especially among the patients

- Health professionals play a major role in informing patients and citizens at large about telehealth services available

- Despite this poor overall awareness, patients and health professionals are generally quite willing to use telehealth.

Great interest among both patients and health professionals in being involved in decision-making, designing, testing and deploying telehealth.

Main issues regarding users' trust and acceptance

The human dimension

- Telehealth has been mainly driven by technology rather than by the needs of people

- Trust plays more than ever a key role in patient-health professional relations

- Patients perceive a risk of 'impersonality' and of neglect of 'psychological factors'

Capacity of Users

- Patients fear the burden of responsibility and lack of skills - telehealth services need to integrate eHealth literacy skills

- Self-confidence has to be supported with training and user-friendly applications

Main issues regarding users' trust and acceptance

The delivery of healthcare

- Telehealth as a complement/added value to and not as a replacement of conventional services

- Access and health inequalities: telehealth should fill the gap and not exacerbate inequalities

- Decisions on whether to adopt telehealth will depend to a great extent to its perceived effects on patient safety

- Organisational aspects: change in routine, workload and lack of support from management are barriers for health professionals' buy in.

- Privacy and confidentiality issues

Main benefits from the users' perspective

Common benefits (all users)

- Improved quality of care through more personalised, continuous, efficient and responsive services

- Improved access to healthcare for:

    - patients living in underserved areas

    - socio-economically disadvantaged patients

- Improved patients' adherence through more active involvement of patients and more regular monitoring from health professionals

Main benefits from the users' perspective

Benefits specific to patients

- Patient empowerment – telehealth improves knowledge of the condition, and facilitate involvement in the care process in partnership with health professionals.

- Quality of life – e.g. increased self-confidence, better awareness of symptoms or improved independence

- Economic benefits: e.g. from e.g. less travel and days off work

Main key drivers for users' acceptance

- To accept telehealth, patients and health professionals want it to be user-centric as opposed to technology-driven.

- Telehealth should not negatively affect the patient–health professional relationship, but rather aim to increase mutual trust;

- Telehealth needs to deliver real benefits and add value to users in relation to solely conventional healthcare;

- Health professionals and patients will accept telehealth services only as long as they have at least the same safety and reliability standard as conventional health services;

- Self-confidence and competence in using telehealth services and mutual confidence between users, are crucial and should not be underestimated

More Info?

www.chainoftrust.eu
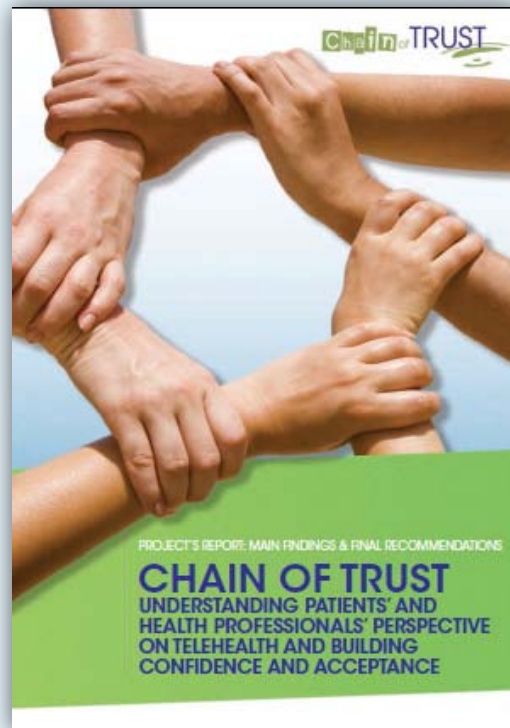
Or contact Liuska Sanna (EPF Project Coordination) liuska.sanna@eu-patient.eu