

IV EPF Regional Advocacy Seminar

Bucharest, 27-28 October 2011



Workshop B1

Patient and professional organisations' perspectives of eHealth and Telehealth, barriers towards acceptance and opportunities for cooperation

Moderator: Walter Atzori
Rapporteur :Timea Cserni



Objectives of this workshop

- To **explore** the increasing importance of eHealth as one of the means to achieve **sustainable, equitable, quality and effective healthcare systems** and why the presence of the patient and health professional community is key to ensuring that eHealth services are built around the needs of all end-users
- To identify the **challenges for and barriers to patients-professionals cooperation and involvement in the eHealth area**
- To **formulate workable recommendations** for ensuring effective patients-professionals cooperation in this area and overcome challenges and barriers

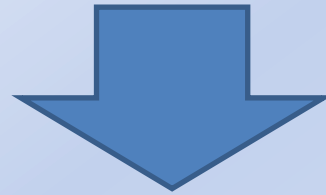
E-Health: a Definition

“e-Health is the combined use of electronic communication and information technology in the health sector (WHO)”



E-Health: a Definition

Despite wide acknowledgment of the potential benefit of eHealth services, the use of eHealth remains limited and with wide disparities across and within Member States.



We agreed that one of the reasons behind this is poor acceptance, awareness of and confidence from health authorities, patients and health professionals

Impact of eHealth

We need to explore the effects of eHealth services on:

- patient behavior and the patient-professional relationship/communications
- access to healthcare/health inequalities
- privacy and confidentiality
- clinical effectiveness and patient safety
- organisational aspects, including clinical practice

- economic aspects (professionals, patients, health systems)
- patient adherence/concordance
- patient-outcomes (satisfaction, quality of life, etc.)
- patient literacy and patient empowerment
- professionals' satisfaction

-

Recommendations

Recommendation 1.

ehealth has a huge potential for enhancing access to and continuity of care, but at the same time we strongly believe that eHealth should not replace face to face communication between patient and professionals . We need to get the balance right.

Recommendation 2.

eHealth is not accessible to all patients due to the digital divide. The risk is that only people with high ICT literacy skills will benefit from eHealth. We need to provide adequate information on eHealth.

Recommendation 3.

eHealth is often presented as « THE SOLUTION » to improve health systems and services while reducing the costs of healthcare. We believe that this too simplistic as an approach, more effort is needed in order to understand benefits and communicate them effectively to all stakeholders.

Recommendations

Recommendation 4.

Need for patients and professionals organisations to cooperate closely in order to understand and raise awareness of the implications of eHealth for patient-professional relationship and communications, but also in terms of roles and responsibilities with a view to maintaining and strengthening mutual trust.

Recommendation 5.

The group believes that there is a lack of understanding among policy makers of users needs and their perceptions of eHealth. There us a need to put in place national strategies for involving users in designing eHealth policies and services.

Recommendation 6.

The group acknowledged that eHealth is a very important area with many implications area for both patients and professionals. EPF should organise a seminar on eHealth inviting all relevant stakeholders to enable mutual learning and understanding of users' perspective and foster user acceptance.