eHealth communication and the citizen – social, organisational and human aspects

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Introduction

The fourth European Workshop on Practical Aspects of Health Informatics (PAHI) 2017, aimed at bringing together clinicians, researchers and students from humanities, social sciences, health care and informatics, as well as developers to exchange experiences and ideas regarding eHealth communication in modern health care. The objective of the workshop was to examine human, organisational and social prerequisites for effective and target-oriented eHealth communication between health authorities, health services and citizens.

Modern health care is characterised by extensive use of health technologies, with eHealth services for citizens becoming commonly available. Although studies demonstrate that citizens tend to use eHealth services and that acceptance of health technologies is increasing, there is little research regarding the impact of eHealth on citizens' health communication and consequently, on safety in health care.

To develop usable and tailored eHealth services for citizens, much more insight into the specific requirements and competencies is needed. The eHealth literacy level needs to be evaluated and put into context. There is evidence that social, institutional and cultural aspects have an impact and we also need to consider these factors when discussing availability and use of health technologies. An important challenge is how we can utilise this knowledge in developing targeted as well as generalised eHealth solutions. There is also an educational aspect to eHealth services. Health-care professionals are obliged to apply health technologies of various kinds in their daily practice, in diagnosis as well as in their communication with patients. To offer smart and citizen-centred services, health professionals must collaborate with researchers and industry.

The presenters and participants at PAHI 2017 discussed these issues through keynotes, paper presentations and an activity workshop. This book is a collection of the full papers submitted (double review). In addition, the abstracts of the other presentations are available.