## Volume 5 / Issue 3-4 / 2010 - Editorial

**Letter from the Editor-in-Chief**

Dear Readers,

Healthcare IT, like other realms of IT and 'technology' in general, is driven by a culture of non-stop innovation. This is undoubtedly good. However, we must also ask ourselves: is innovation the only solution? Such a question is urgent, given the longrunning pressure on healthcare budgets, and the financial crisis, which has gripped the world for the past two years.

It is clear, healthcare IT offers tremendous opportunities to save money as long as it is deployed correctly. Unfortunately this has been neglected by policy makers, healthcare IT users and even its vendors and developers. In this issue of Healthcare IT Management, we come across a variety of examples.

Our Cover Story on Enterprise Architecture makes a case to strengthen the role of 'common sense' in the healthcare IT development environment. We must accept two factors:

a) healthcare IT follows the same lifecycle as other IT areas (from invention and innovation to commodification)

b) choices are often made by IT enthusiasts and early adopters who are fated to overlook point a. The outcome is unfortunate. Tried-and-tested solutions like the telephone, which have successfully become commodities, are often ignored, although both their technology and business cases are strongly proven. Instead, attention is focused on new solutions whose position in the technology lifecycle is unclear, and out of synchronisation with the rest of the IT environment. This, the author argues, results in a state of chaos.

Another example of a proven solution is the humble barcode. A feature article from the UK argues that barcodes offer a cost-effective solution to two everyday challenges faced by healthcare professionals: medication errors and quicker access to patient data. In addition, they also provide the means for higher efficiency in running a hospital, in terms of stock control and asset tracking.

Meaningful deployment of healthcare IT systems is not always an issue of the technological 'what' but also the 'where'. While complex IT applications in a hospital setting rightly demand – and get – our attention, it is also important to consider the relevance of smaller, simpler systems outside the hospital.

A feature article in Healthcare IT Management 2/2010 reviewed E-Health for nurses. They are the only healthcare professionals to interact with patients on a 24/7 basis, thus offering an opportunity for new healthcare technologies to quickly prove their relevance. In this issue, we take a look at a related domain, that of midwives, and the opportunities for E-Health in midwifery in New Zealand.

As far as the 'where' of healthcare IT deployment is concerned, some E-Health proponents believe it offers a great solution to the most pressing healthcare problems faced by the poorest of developing countries, not least in Africa. A South African Professor and authority on the subject disagrees.

Please let me invite you as well to our upcoming IT @ Networking Awards 2011 from 19 – 20 January. This unique competition promotes cross-departmental learning and will introduce healthcare IT solutions, which may not all be glitzy or glamorous, but do their job and do it well. May we count on your support to make this Event a success? Members of HITM are eligible to a very special rate.

Best regards,

**Christian Marolt**

Published on : Wed, 15 Dec 2010