

Volume 1 / Issue 5 2005 - Editorial

Documentation and Archiving

Author

Caroline Hommez

In this issue, we have decided to focus on one of the least excitingly, yet most crucial aspects of ehealth and telemedicine, namely documentation and archiving. All of the broad ehealth initiatives ongoing in Europe, on national or hospital level, (EPR, PACS,...) rely on a strong, secure, and well organized documentation and archiving system. The main interest of most of these projects lies in the possibility for professionals and patients to have instantaneous access to a large volume of stored information.

Beyond the realisation that documentation and archiving are essential, many questions arise on the specifics: What, how, where and why.

What to Save?

This is what Ragnhild Helleso has been studying, and she reveals how much the content of a patient record depends on the person entering the data. For patients in transition between hospital and homecare, hospital nurses need to make decisions on which information to pass on to their homecare colleagues. Since they have different demands and needs, homecare workers sometimes have to go back to the hospital for further details, which makes the whole communication project counterproductive.

How to Save?

Alexander Beyer's experience at Erlangen University Hospital demonstrates that, in order to be accepted and efficient, a system has to be user friendly and present the user with genuine added value.

Where to Save?

It might be worth considering cooperation. A documentation system is expensive, and joining forces with other hospitals, as IT professionals did in the French region of Franche Comté might be cost effective. A further advantage is presenting a united front vis-à-vis an industrial partner who will be in charge of hosting documents.

Storage space is but one of the substantial advantages of electronic archiving, as cleverly brought to light by Martin Peacock from the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital of Dublin.

Our selected project is the very promising and technologically advanced KSYOS Tele dermatology Consultation System and virtual hospital in Amsterdam. Combining cost efficiency, faster service and improved patient outcome is the difficult equation Leonard Witkamp and his team have managed to achieve.

Published on : Wed, 28 Sep 2005