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Processes

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We reflect at length in the hospital setting on the way to reconfigure the work processes, to replace old methods by new digital ones, or to digitise entire systems.

In this context, a possibility is the introduction of a system of managing patient data ('Patient Data Management System' or PDMS), which will support the care processes both qualitatively and quantitatively thanks to electronic documentation systems, and the presentation and availability of information, as Udo Poth, Director of the Data Management Centre in the Isar Clinic at the Technical University of Munich describes. Since the project of implementing a service-oriented general system was not realised in the choice or purchase of an appropriate product, other options must be identified.

Information networking at the time of the integration of imaging modalities also plays an important role, as we know, in improving the efficiency and profitability of professional structures. Ruud van der Marel, Business Manager of Radiology at Sint Franciscus Gasthuis in Rotterdam, describes the decision process and the implementation of a radiology information system in his establishment. The Sint Franciscus Gasthuis opted for an integrated web application, which, thanks to transparent architecture, can easily be connected to other systems in the hospital. The establishment had previously decided on another solution, but reconsidered its decision based on objectives to be reached.

The fact that a complete PACS can be a support network for the improvement of training and the return-on-investment of the imaging system is described by Michal Javornik and Otto Dostal of the Czech Republic.

The system of classification of patients can be seriously taken into account during a remodelling of the work processes. A local Swedish model of following the path of a patient in the general care process, from diagnosis to follow-up treatment, through all of the internal and external services, awakened the interest of Dutch colleagues, who set off on a pilot project at their European neighbours'. The innovative aspect of this 'follow-up model' is the orientation process, which contrary to other models in operation elsewhere, offers only reports on the waiting time in the health system.

The efficiency of processes also signifies, evidently, more favourable conditions of care for the patient. This can be realised in the case of following wearers of pacemakers, on the basis of an interdisciplinary network, as illustrated in the report of A. Kollman from Austria. Long journeys to specialist clinics can be avoided, because this type of telemedical concept is integrated into the existing IT infrastructure of the participating establishments.

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