

## **Zoom On: Dipak Kalra, President-The EuroRec Institute & Clinical Professor-Health Informatics, UCL**



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### **What are your key areas of interest and research?**

My main area of interest and research, is helping to drive the future evolution of electronic health records (EHRs) to be a rich, holistic and smart information resource to all of the players involved in health care and research. EHRs need to underpin intelligent use of health data to support patients and healthy citizens in optimising their health and healthcare, to support professional decision-making and high quality practice and to enable us to learn from individual and population records so that health services can be more personalised, more efficient and safe. They can also help us to accelerate our understanding of diseases, treatments and their prevention. My present areas of focus include semantic interoperability, enabling meaning to be understood by people and computers when data are shared between different information systems and different health settings and information governance, especially developing best practices in the trustworthy re-use of health information for research.

### **What are the major challenges in your field?**

One of our major challenges is that health information and therefore the development and procurement of health ICT systems and solutions, need to serve many different purposes and many different stakeholders. Their needs often pull the investments in health systems and the development of standards in different directions and unfortunately those needs which are closest to the care of individual patients can easily be overshadowed by the needs of those who need to make high-level management decisions. As a consequence our ICT systems are often better at management reporting than they are at supporting the documentation of care about individuals and the delivery of useful information to guide care decisions about individuals. Healthcare providers, industry, standards bodies and policymakers must therefore work together to advance EHRs and their semantic interoperability at a global level.

### **What is your top management tip?**

Health ICT solutions have to meet the needs of many stakeholders. Decisions about procurements at the level of individual care organisations or regional and national health networks must adequately consult all of the relevant stakeholders. However this must especially include patients and healthcare professionals, who will inevitably capture most of the information that all of the other stakeholders wish to use. Unless the systems deliver for these individuals, everybody else will have poor quality data, poor evidence and make unwise management decisions from it.

### **What would you single out as a career highlight?**

Probably one of my greatest areas of success, and for which I am known, has been leading the development of a European and international standard for the communication of electronic health record information. However, I hope that my greatest contribution has really been the long-term championing of the vision for great electronic health records and great value from good quality, interoperable health information.

### **If you had not chosen this career path what do you think you would have become?**

My original career path, before health informatics, was as a general practitioner. I would like to think that, if I had not fallen in love with health informatics, I would have played leading roles nationally and internationally to ensure that this profession always strongly promotes the best interests of patients, healthy citizens and populations, as well as being a good person-centred GP to my patients.

### **What are your personal interests outside of work?**

Before I left London and moved to Brussels I had just discovered how wonderful it is to play golf! Now that I have settled down here, I need to discover a golf course nearby so I can take this up again. I'm not very good yet, but I expect to have great fun learning how to eventually play the game well.

### **What is your favourite quote?**

"Luck is when preparation meets opportunity." Seneca the Younger, Roman philosopher.

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