



eHealth, health inequalities & the road to 'empowerment'

eHealth in Europe: Empowering patients and offering better
connected healthcare services

27 January 2015, Thon Hotel City Centre, Brussels

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OVERVIEW

Presentation outline

- › Background info re: EPHA & e/mHealth activities
- › eHealth Stakeholder Group reports on 'Health inequalities and eHealth' & eSkills and health workforce (incl. recommendations)
- › Barriers & challenges experienced by patients/end users & vulnerable groups
- › Barriers experienced by health professionals & providers
- › Projects & innovative solutions tackling these barriers



WHO ARE WE?

The European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)....

- › Represents the public health community throughout Europe; +/- 100 member organisations (EU-28, EFTA, EU applicant/candidate countries & beyond)
- › Expresses the interests of disease-specific communities (e.g. cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular, HIV/AIDS, mental health), health professionals (e.g. nurses, doctors, pharmacists), vulnerable individuals (e.g. older people, Roma), regions, academics...
- › Advocates for more citizen involvement & transparency in political decision-making
- › Mission: to bring together the public health community to provide thought leadership and facilitate change; to build public health capacity to deliver equitable solutions to European public health challenges, to improve health and **reduce health inequalities**
- › Vision: a Europe with universal good health and well-being, where **all have access** to a sustainable and high quality health system
- › Values: equity, sustainability, diversity, solidarity, universality, good governance



Health: a dynamic sector

Context & changing paradigm

- Ageing European society, increase of chronic diseases & multimorbidity
- Technological & scientific progress, incl. personalised medicine
- Rapid uptake of ICT, especially smartphones
- Better informed patients with higher expectations, increased choices and self-management
- Health system reform: from treatment to prevention & health promotion
- Shift towards provision of integrated care, home care
- Cross-border healthcare dimension
- BUT: health professional shortages & mobility, increased workloads & deteriorating conditions, austerity measures...
- **Growing health inequalities within / between MS, problems re: access to healthcare**



e/mHealth

EPHA activities

- Briefing papers on eHealth (2011) and mHealth (2013)
- EC consultation responses re: eHAP 2012-2020 (2012) , mHealth Green Paper (2014)
- Input into 2013 eHealth Own-Initiative Report by MEP Ayuso (S&D, Spain)
- Supporting implementation of **2012-2020 eHealth Action Plan** and relevant key actions of the **Digital Agenda for Europe**
- Members of eHealth Stakeholder Group by DG CONNECT (2012-2015, +/- 30 EU umbrella organisations - civil society, patients, health professionals, industry)
- 5 EHSG reports in 2014: interoperability, patient access to EHRs, telemedicine deployment, eSkills and health workforce, **health inequalities & eHealth** (issue leader)
- How to achieve **'triple win'**: patient empowerment, health service effectiveness, market access?
- ENS4Care project (2013-15)



EHSG REPORT (1)

Health Inequalities & eHealth

Purpose

- Provide DG CONNECT with stakeholder input as to why it is crucial to pay close attention to link between health inequalities and eHealth, and ensure this is explicit in eHealth & related policy discussions
- Present a snapshot of how these issues are being addressed & tackled across Europe at policy & industry level
- Provide key references, stimulate dialogue & future research at EU level
- Encouraging better policy coherence with EU activities regarding health inequalities 'offline'



eHealth Task Force Report

Redesigning health in Europe for 2020

Lever for Change # 5, 'Include Everyone':

'The main preconditions (...) are political and regulatory commitment to **reduction of health inequalities**; with professionals, providers, and payers ensuring **no discrimination** in provision of care, **equity of access** and in using eHealth tools; and citizens and patients **having an understanding** of health and basic IT literacy'



EHSG REPORT (1)

Health Inequalities & eHealth

Quotes

‘Although the ‘digital divide’ appears to be narrowing slowly but steadily as far as access to technology is concerned, at least in the richer MS and thanks to mobile devices, the **knowledge gap** between proficient and inept users is becoming ever wider (...)’

‘*Every European Digital* (...) is still a long way off, not least given the **pronounced differences in wealth, technology deployment and acceptance** both between and within Member States’

‘The ultimate risk is that **the flaws of the traditional health system will be mirrored and potentially even aggravated online**’

EHSG SUBGROUP

Acknowledgements



Organisations



European Level



Associations

Consumer representatives



Industry

Civil Society



Health Professionals



Patient representatives



e/mHealth tools & apps

Patients / consumers & vulnerable groups

'Empowerment' via better information, 'co-production of health', direct contact with HCPs, remote monitoring & AAL, ease of mind, overcoming isolation, telehealth, wider choice...

BUT

- ›(Access, affordability, user-friendliness, trust & confidence, privacy/security, effort...)
- ›Patient safety: incorrect data, erroneous use of gadgets, accuracy & capability
- ›Incorrect self-diagnosis leading to bad decision-making, self-harm; HCPs can address broader & relevant social & cultural issues, gender, etc.
- ›Marketing unhealthy behaviours to children, vulnerable groups
- ›Stress & technological pressure (personal / professional boundary, need to upgrade, multiple communication channels, anxiety caused by online fora)
- ›Practicability: how to integrate into routines? Unlike Internet banking, health is highly personal & emotional, not a 'multitasking' activity
- ›Low tech solutions / social innovation (family / informal carers)?
- ›Individuals wishing to 'opt out': consequences / termination of offline services?
- ›Health as a human right for all vs health as consumer good



e/mHealth tools & apps

Health professionals / providers

‘**Empowerment**’ via better administration & collaboration, less duplication, fewer errors, beside support, real-time monitoring, fewer consultations / hospitalisations, better compliance...

BUT

- (Interoperability, legal & technical issues, data protection, safety, quality...)
- Overcoming professional resistance – raise awareness of what’s there & what works well
- Need resources for education & training to deliver eHealth services, build up eSkills
- Proper integration into work schedules, no add-on ‘eHealth bureaucracy’
- Importance of determining subtleties, lifestyle context, medicine interactions, etc.
- Clear responsibilities and boundaries (e.g. liability)
- Reimbursement: what is included, what do other MS include?
- Capacity & know-how to implement (e.g. managing ESF, transferability of pilots)
- Impact assessments (avoid ‘competition’ with other health investments)
- Role of regional / local authorities in identifying obstacles / opportunities
- Need to focus on service innovation, not only technology



mHealth



‘For many people in Europe, mHealth constitutes the **first concrete manifestation of eHealth** (...) smartphones and tablets are bringing the digital world closer into the realm of ordinary people’ (EPHA Response to Green Paper consultation, 2014)



e/mHealth

eInclusion

Non-traditional end users / people (potentially) outside reach of e/mHealth:

- ❖ Geographically excluded (e.g. rural, peripheral areas)
- ❖ Poor / homeless / unemployed
- ❖ Individuals with little or no formal education and/or no interest in ICT
- ❖ Patients suffering from specific diseases / conditions
- ❖ People with physical / mental / learning disabilities
- ❖ Migrants (including undocumented), discriminated and / or transient minorities (e.g. Roma communities), members of other vulnerable groups
- ❖ (Some) older people



Literacy

Digital health literacy is complex and involves a number of different literacies that require cognitive and behavioural competences applied simultaneously:

- .basic literacy (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, numeracy)
 - .digital literacy (using and navigating ICT tools and Internet)
 - .media literacy (finding and distinguishing between information sources)
 - .health literacy (being able to understand, contextualise, appraise and act upon health information)
- health skills are also by-products of formal education!

Who is providing health information today? Can the information be trusted?

How meaningful is online health information to non-traditional ICT users?

Where is the (regulatory / intentional) boundary between health and well-being?

Will people make the right decisions & achieve better health outcomes?



Innovation

Ending inequalities?

- 'Apps' – new engagement with health & wellbeing via personalisation, gaming, self-control, competition...
- Direct communication between HCPs & patients, smart alerts/SMS, virtual visits/simulation, video consultation...
- Creative adaptation, e.g. texting, video, photos, pictograms, GPS...
- Breaking barriers re: physical/mental disabilities (voice-generated content, 'lip reading' software, customised devices)
- Remote monitoring of chronic conditions, early detection, falls prevention (sensors, robots, ...)
- Online info & coaching: prevention, treatment & support (e.g. e-Mental health, unhealthy behaviours)
- ICT counters dominance of formal learning & fosters new competences
- Transcending cultural barriers (multilingual, cultural relevance, etc.)
- Integration of multiple functions enables mobility, transnationalism
- Potential to 'include everyone' in cost-effective and convenient way
- **BUT: Political will & business model for including society's weakest?**



e/mHealth

Transferable good practices

Examples from

- Sweden
- United Kingdom
- Spain
- Netherlands
- Denmark
- ...



Past / ongoing EU Projects



To be continued.... National / regional eHealth strategies addressing health inequalities and demonstrating policy coherence, industry tools designed for target groups, blended care solutions, good practices re: eInclusion...



EHSG Report (1)

EHSG recommendations: health inequalities

- › Improve access to eHealth and involve all stakeholders
- › Accommodate diverse needs & reduce technological pressure
- › Improve digital health literacy
- › Integrate eHealth into overall health and social care system policy
- › Evaluate the impact of eHealth solutions and build up evidence base
- › Give particular consideration to empowering patients with disabilities / specific diseases
- › Consider financial subsidies for the purchase of eHealth equipment / ICT access



EHSG REPORT (2)

eSkills and health workforce

Supporting digital skills (eHAP 2012-2020 / Digital Agenda)

- Issue leader – European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN)
- Health workers are primary user group & give advice to / train patients
- All HCPs affected: urgent need to close skills gaps by linking HWF skills requirements with eHealth services
- Need polyvalent HCPs with general & specific skills (not 'IT managers')
- HWF & patients need to be involved in design & development of eHealth solutions (see 'Chain of Trust' project findings)
- EU policy context
 - Modernised Professional Qualifications Directive, Patients' Rights in Cross-border Healthcare Directive
 - EC Communication on eSkills for the 21st century / Council Conclusions on eSkills strategy (2007)
 - Action Plan on the European Health Workforce (incl. Joint Action on EU HWF, CPD mapping study)
 - Employment Package (2012), Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs (2013)
 - EU/US Memorandum of Understanding (2010) & Transatlantic eHealth Cooperation Roadmap (2013)



EHSG Report (2)

EHSG recommendations: eSkills

- EC & MS should take steps to ensure that eHealth is integrated into HCP curricula (undergraduate, postgraduate & beyond) & make use of the new possibilities provided by the updated Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36
- MS should strengthen efforts on Continuous Professional Development, which should also include eSkills
- EC should coordinate efforts at EU level to share good practices & map common eSkills, through the setting-up of a Thematic Network & use of Social Cohesion Funds
- Importance of forecasting skills
- Patient-centred eHealth services require increasing eHealth literacy of patients, citizens and health professionals



ENS4Care

eHealth innovation

Evidence based guidelines for nurses & social care workers for the deployment of eHealth services (telehealth & telecare)

- Oct 2013 – Oct 2015, led by European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN), www.ens4care.eu
- 24 partners from across Europe
- Sharing good nursing & social work practices, stimulating transfer of innovation
- Creating **set of guidelines** focusing on five areas:
 - ICT enabled health coaching in prevention
 - ICT enabled Integrated Care: Clinical Practice
 - ICT enabled Integrated Care: Advanced Practitioner Nursing & Social Care
 - ICT enabled Integrated Care: Nurse ePrescribing
- Goal is to achieve **sustainability**: use of evidence provided by the network to drive further implementation of telehealth and telecare to the benefit of European citizens
- Guidelines could be the point of reference for future Horizon 2020 pilots



Palante project

A step towards 'empowerment'

- **Palante pilots** address many of the concerns mentioned in EHSR reports
 - Secure patient access to EHR
 - Self-management of personal health information
 - Direct communication between patients & caregivers, providing decision support
 - Tailored education & lifestyle guidance
 - Integrated care pathways
 - Chronic disease management support services
 - Development of telemedicine
 - Overcoming professional resistance & improving patient satisfaction
 - Use of innovative technology (videos, online journals, visualisation tools, messaging...)
- Can they be **transferred on a large scale for the benefit of all end users?**



Thank you for your attention.

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