The Role of Patients and their Health Cards in Integrated eHealth Environments

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Devices, devices, devices ...
Paradigms are there to change …

• Shared care paradigm → personal care paradigm
• Organization centered → process oriented → person centered approach
• Stakeholders: policy makers, standards developing organizations, industry, patient and citizen groups → mobility, mobile world → mHealth
• Security, privacy, quality support, etc. → safety gets even more important (see Portoroz Declaration)
• Identification, authentication, identity, ID management, multiple identities, RFID, NFC, biometrics, EHR, PHR
• What about awareness of user communities in Europe and beyond towards moving traditional healthcare provision towards technology-supported eHealth ??
Involved & empowered patients?

"Ubiquitous computing" as better way for patients

To what degree may, shall, and must patients be “involved”?

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Patient empowerment facts

- Engaged patients will have better outcomes
- Citizens are more willing to take their share on the costs if they feel responsible and involved
- Confidence in, and acceptance of, healthcare systems and their tools used depend on the citizens’ awareness and acceptance
- Health care systems profit from engaged citizens
- eHealth depends on the involvement of citizens
- Many national health plans already include citizen involvement as such
Patient empowerment drawbacks

- Citizens are yet little interested in getting involved, especially if they are healthy.
- Involving patients is more than “just another topic on the agenda”; it is a cultural change (e.g. trustworthy doctor-patient relationship).
- Involving patients is a necessity meeting the near-future challenges (demographic factors, missing infrastructure in rural areas, mobility).
- Though on the agenda – few governments really invest in motivating citizens to get involved.
- Patient ombudspersons? Patient representatives?
Society implications & reflections

IT Security, network security, firewall → system level

Data security, quality, safety
→ personal level

Administrative and technical / organizational data protection,
Privacy, medical secrecy, Hippocratic Oath

Ethics and general moral basics of the society
Patient empowerment necessities

- Associations etc. to advocate the citizens’ interests
- Ethical / cultural / behavioral differences
- Shift in awareness from acute healthcare to life-long-health (preventive healthcare)
- Motivation of patients depends on co-operation between doctors and patients
- Special groups / minorities have to be taken care of
- The various institutions (HCE) have to provide reliable up-to-date information free of stakeholders’ interests
- A wholehearted marketing strategy is needed

- Security tokens - health cards and devices - play a vital role for securely accessing sensitive personal health data
Token privacy and security

- Secure and reliable personal identification and entitlement
- Access to personal health data
- Key to support user authentication and confidentiality of sensitive personal data
- Access to health care entitlement
- Act as secure portable data carriers which are under the control of the patient and the health care professional
- Provide essential information in emergencies and support continuity of care
- Improve the communication between carers
- Allow faster and much better access to medication information (medication control)
- Involve the patient in the healthcare process (partnering)
Patient tokens empower citizens

- Satisfied patients
- Enable easier access to healthcare
- Support shared care
- Are provided with choices based on actual information
- Participate in decision making
- Facilitate free movement of patients across borders

- Patient record is tangible

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Application areas and benefits

Whole System Capability

Benefits (mostly) already achieved

Service Provider Information Technologies

“Paper”

Service User Information Technologies

New developments

Potential to Transform Service Delivery

smartcards

???
Citizens appreciate support

- General information through media
  - brochure, leaflet, flyer, TV, posters, Internet
- Individually through hardcopies
  - printout of card data, detailed description, instructions
- Help lines through
  - open phones in regions, central call centre, email, Internet (FAQ)
- Evaluation of the response by
  - anonymous phone survey
  - statistical analysis of phone inquiries
  - statistical analysis of questions to HC providers
  - High acceptance level and satisfaction
Closing Statements

• eHealth is no longer a dream, it’s reality in different fields within and outside traditional healthcare, social security, and welfare
• Patient involvement and patient empowerment on its way but it’s yet a very long way to go

• Security and safety are key to technical success stories
• Awareness, confidence, acceptance are key to human success stories

• MIE 2008: “eHealth beyond the horizon – get IT there”
• But don’t leave the most important source behind – the people!

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