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Conference Abstract

European Code of Practice for Telehealth Services

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Abstract

The European Code of Practice for Telehealth Services was released at Medetel in April 2013 and the framework for its adoption in member states is now in place. This presentation explains the purpose of the Code and outlines its contents. Crucially the presentation will point towards the ways in which the European Code (a) establishes a quality benchmark for telehealth services; and (b) helps to shape telehealth services in ways that supports patient/user autonomy. In so doing the Code of Practice supports the direction set by the European eHealth Strategy - this, in turn, responding to many of the radical recommendations of the 2012 eHealth Task Force.

The presentation will, at the outset, note that the European Code focuses on health in its sense of 'well-being'. This is in keeping with the major role seen for telehealth in prevention and in public health (with implications for behaviours, lifestyles, and in self-management). The European Code will be shown to be both (i) 'bottom-up', responding to the needs and choices of users and, where appropriate, carers; and (ii) wide-ranging and, therefore, relevant to people's needs as different as pregnancy and palliative care.

The understanding of telehealth services that is adopted by the European Code is, therefore, one that is concerned with provision in the sense of enabling people to access the services they need/want rather than the services being delivered in a manner that often relates to assessments by 'professionals'. It embraces service approaches (using terrestrial and mobile networks) that include health and motivational coaching, medication compliance, activity monitoring, vital-signs monitoring, social alarms and telecare. The European Code challenges, therefore, perspectives on telehealth that are narrowly focused on vital-signs monitoring.

Keywords:

Telehealth, quality, benchmark, standard, code

Presentation available at: <http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/events/third-annual-international-congress-telehealth-and-telecare>