

MethoTelemed

Methodology to assess telemedicine applications

This study brings together international academic excellence, policy makers, European networks and the World Health Organization. Their aim is to develop academically rigorous and practically useful guidance into a methodology to assess telemedicine applications

Objectives of the Study

Context: Most reviews of telemedicine conclude that irrefutable evidence of the positive impact of telemedicine on clinical outcomes still eludes us. Telemedicine may very well be effective, but the quality of studies and the lack of a standardized system represents a barrier for evaluating their potential benefit and a challenge for further research.

MethoTelemed addresses these shortcomings and aims to provide a benchmark document ('MethoTelemed Guidance') which will

- Provide systematic documentation of the manner and extent of telemedicine applications in healthcare systems and
- Provide a structured framework to assess the effectiveness and contribution to quality of care of telemedicine applications.

The objectives of the study are:

- To deliver an extensive review of relevant published literature on impacts, costs and benefits of telemedicine, which has used a range of research methods;
- To assess the appropriateness or otherwise of existing HTA methods for evaluating telemedicine;
- To propose a methodology by consensus for systematic academic assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of telemedicine for relevant stakeholders according to their expectations

The main outcomes of this study are proposed methodologies to guide academic endeavours as well as policy decisions.

Study Description

MethoTelemed brings together international academic excellence, policy makers, European networks and the World Health Organization. Their aim is to develop academically rigorous and practically useful guidance into a methodology to assess telemedicine applications in Europe.

The challenges are to bridge the gaps between different scholarly perspectives and to identify and recommend approved methodologies to assess quality and efficiency in a broader societal perspective.

MethoTelemed will:

- Provide a systematic and academically rigorous review of research on telemedicine. It will carry out a systematic and clearly delineated literature review using searches which ensure a comprehensive coverage of relevant work.
- Undertake a systematic review of health technology assessment methodology.
- Pay careful attention to stakeholder perspectives through a consultation workshop; and
- Seek validation by experts through a consultation workshop.

SCENARIO

Across European regions, the ageing population is increasing. As current healthcare services are unable to support the increase in demand, decision makers are increasingly seeking to build a more efficient health care service which meets patients' expectations. In this context telemedicine would seem to provide a useful, innovative and efficient alternative. However, decision makers must base their decisions on evidence, and evidence suggests that new research with a standardized methodology is needed to demonstrate comprehensively the effectiveness and efficiency of telemedicine applications.

Expected Outcomes

The main outcomes of the project are proposed methodologies to guide academic endeavours as well as policy decisions. This provides a practical toolkit and framework for assessing the quality and effectiveness of telemedicine. MethoTelemed Guidance will propose methodologies for systematic academic assessment in the short, medium and long term, of the usefulness, durability, and acceptability of telemedicine for relevant stakeholders and in relation to a range of outcomes;

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<http://www.telemed.no/methotelemed.4567567-51256.html>

Tenderer:

MedCom (Denmark)

Partners:

- Norwegian Centre for Integrated Care and Telemedicine (Norway)
- Department of Applied Social Science, University of Stirling (Scotland)
- The Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services (Norway)

Timetable: from February 2009 to February 2010

Total cost: € 249,045

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KEYWORDS

Telemedicine, Health Technology Assessment, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Methodologies, Evidence based decision making, Systematic review, Health services research