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Pre-conference abstract

A new model for assessment of telemedicine—MAST

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Abstract

Introduction: During the last years telemedicine has been presented as a solution to health care systems facing an aging population, increase in the number of patients with chronic illnesses and limited budgets. However, the spreading and large scale implementation of telemedicine in Europe is still lacking. A frequently used argument for this is lack of evidence.

Aim: On this basis the EU commission initiated a project in 2009 with the aim to provide a structured framework for assessing the effectiveness and contribution to quality of care of telemedicine applications.

Methods: The development of the model is based on results from workshops with stakeholders and users of telemedicine, a systematic literature review (published in Ekeland et al., 2010) and the EUnetHTA Core Model for interventions.

Results: MAST should be used if the purpose of an assessment is to describe effectiveness and contribution to quality of care of telemedicine applications and to produce basis for decision-making. In this case MAST defines the relevant assessment as a multi-disciplinary process that summarises and evaluates information about the medical, social, economic and ethical issues related to the use of telemedicine in a systematic, unbiased, robust manner. MAST includes three elements:

- Preceding considerations of issues that should be considered before assessment of a telemedicine application is initiated.
- Multi-disciplinary assessment of the outcomes of telemedicine within seven domains (Health problem, safety, clinical effectiveness, patient perspectives, economic aspects, organisational aspects and socio-cultural, ethical and legal aspects).
- Assessment of the transferability of the results found.

Discussion: MAST is currently being used in evaluation of 21 telemedicine projects with a total of 5000 patients in RENEWING HEALTH (2010–2012), a project under the CIP programme of DG INFSO, European Commission.

Keywords

telemedicine, assessment, evaluation, renewing health
