New health information system in UAE to be connected via an online network by 2011

As the Ministry of Health announced, with the implementation of Wareed, the new health information system of hospitals and clinics in the UAE will be connected via an online network by 2011 to improve patient care and ensure patient safety.

This network aims to exchange and access to medical and health information between physicians and doctors as well as healthcare peers across the country. Patients can now be treated in the most effective way by having access to their treatment results, updates and follow-ups. They can also easily be transferred from one hospital to another. The network runs even outside of the country thanks to specific agreements between the hospitals. The new system promises to speed up data sharing, saving time and money, decreasing the waiting time for medical appointments but most importantly has the ability to provide international medical opinion.

Although Wareed has a lot of advantages, it has some drawbacks. The main concerns are how to run the system in the most efficient way and ensure patient safety while going through the process of implementing the customer-centric data system. At the 3rd Annual Healthcare Expansion Congress Mid-East, organized by naseba, e-health applications in the region, the importance of information at the point of care, patient safety and care continuity were the hottest issues discussed during the event. The leading solution providers, as well as decision makers from the healthcare industry, gathered around the globe gathered together to share their experiences and find the best solutions to their needs.

Effectiveness in implementation:

Raj Singh, healthcare solutions consultant EMEA, Hitachi Data Systems, said: "A series must be effective of implementing e-Health services for the population of the UAE requires an assessment of the actual requirements and objectives of the people. Certainly in today’s world there exists the technical capability to deliver these services. Clearly, the technical application suite is to meet and exceed the service level requirements that may be placed upon them." The key considerations for such capability should also take into account the medical and clinical requirements, together with stated objectives for improved care, workflow processes and to improve the depth and breadth of medical care possible. These ‘healthcare business-level’ objectives can then be translated to technology solutions; government requirements designed and implemented to meet them.

How to ensure patient safety?

Patient safety is and should continue to be the most important consideration for delivering the new system. A certain element of risk from human errors always remains but we should certainly be able to address avoidable and often costly mistakes, noted Raj Singh.

The reliability of eHealth information systems coupled with advances in technologies such as RFID and Finger Vein Biometrics can help improve patient safety significantly. The most important consideration for improving patient safety still relies, however, on the healthcare providers who need to ensure they have the best care practices with correct patient identification throughout their healthcare workflows and processes, he added.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a role model:

On the second day of the 3rd Annual Healthcare Expansion Congress Mid-East, Dr. Fahad Bin Saleh Al Orfi, the MD Chief Executive Officer of King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Center, Riyadh, shared the experience of e-health application in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is the first country in the Middle East region, to have implemented the eICU program, patented by VISICU, which monitors patients in ICUs and sends an alert to caregivers when the patient’s vital signs indicate potential complications at any point in time.

The eICU Program provides an alternative way to deliver high-quality critical care when specialist resources are limited. The eICU vision is to have centrally-intensified intensivists physicians & critical care nurses - round-the-clock at an eICU Center - to help bedside teams watch over their sickest patients and to prioritize interventions based on the evidence. The eICU is designed to provide deep insights into the most relevant issues affecting the medical community today in addition to providing opportunity for healthcare professionals to source the newest solutions for their current and upcoming projects while meeting leading global solution providers.

The 3rd Annual Healthcare Expansion Congress Mid-East has become the leading upper level executive congress in the Middle East Healthcare industry. Following the success of its healthcare series, naseba has decided to expand the healthcare conference to the Middle East West as well as in Europe.

Abu Dhabi seeks to privatise some services

The Abu Dhabi government is seeking external investment in the emirate’s healthcare system as it looks to privatise some services. Zaid Al Siksek, chief executive of the Health Authority Abu Dhabi, said it wants the system to become less dependent on publicly run institutions, which in the past have ‘not been as efficient as possible’. He said 50 private firms have filed applications to invest in the emirate’s health care system, but only four of those are expected to ‘move forward’.

First Cyberknife system installed in Saudi hospital

US-based Accuray Incorporated has announced that the first CyberKnife Robotic Radiosurgery System in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be installed at King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Center in Riyadh. It is the first CyberKnife System to be installed in the Middle East region.

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Oman Health care City plans dropped

Kuwait-based Gulf Investment House has announced that it has abandoned plans to develop a $1.1bn Healthcare City 100 km outside of Muscat, MEID, has reported. The company did not say why the plans for the mixed use development, which was to have included medical colleges, hotels, hospitals and hotels, were dropped.

Over 28% of Qatari children diabetic

Instances of childhood diabetes in Qatar have more than doubled in the past decade, from 15.7% of under-fives to 28.2%, delegates at the inaugural International Childhood Diabetes and Obesity Conference in Doha were told. Approximately 45% of Qataris are estimated to be obese, which has been linked to increasing instances of diabetes.

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