

Introduction to “Health information technology for development: use of ICTs for health equity” minitrack

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1. Introduction

Concepts of health equity, healthcare access and outcomes are important to understand the challenges and opportunities for creating a better world with ICTs. In particular, the concept of health equity can help us understand the duality between healthcare access and outcomes. The growing use of mHealth applications have offered opportunities to address some of the individual, community and public health challenges that current ICTs do not address and often complicate the quest for better healthcare provision. One such success in the field of information systems and information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D) is the HISP project which has been adopted in several countries with great success.

The importance of healthcare in development can be seen in both the millennium development goals and in the ‘new’ sustainable development goals (SDGs) [1, 2]. Many of the SDGs are directly, or indirectly related to healthcare. Most apparent is the goal “good health and well-being” that relates to making sure that all individuals have access to health care and safe medicines and vaccines. Hence, the international community recognizes equal access to health care as paramount for the global development agenda.

This mini-track aim to discuss issues such as: Use of ICTs to enable equitable healthcare provision; Healthcare applications to combat the spread of infectious diseases; Use of mobile healthcare applications to provide greater access to healthcare; Location based mHealth applications for disabilities and/or multiple chronic conditions and in epidemiology/public health surveillance, community data collection and remote monitoring of patients; and Evaluation of mHealth and other innovations in offering equitable healthcare to individuals and communities in need.

This minitrack includes one paper. In the paper, “*Development of a Mobile Tele-Simulation Unit Prototype for Training of Rural and Remote Emergency Health Care Providers*” Jennifer Jewer, Adam Dubrowski, Kristopher Hoover, Andrew Smith and Michael Parsons “outlines the development of a Mobile TeleSimulation Unit (MTU) prototype to address the challenges of training in rural and remote settings”. They argue that there is an inequality between urban and rural areas in access to training of emergency health care providers, and that this inequality poses challenges in the provision of health care. They developed a prototype that aims to remedy this inequality by increasing the opportunity for remote healthcare providers to get access to training. While the authors recognized that developing a complex intervention for the delivery of health care training has many challenges, they conclude that “[t]he MTU prototype appears to be an effective means to make quality simulation training on procedural skills more accessible to emergency health care providers in rural and remote areas”.

2. References

- [1] UN. *Millennium Development Goals Indicators*. 2008. Accessed December 6, 2018 from: <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Indicators/OfficialList.htm>.
- [2]. UNDP. *Sustainable Development Goals*. 2015. Accessed December 6, 2018 from: http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/brochure/SDGs_Booklet_Web_En.pdf.