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Harnessing ICT-based Tool for Improving the Collaborative Health Planning Debate; case of Logan-Beaudesert, Australia

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Abstract

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The field of collaborative health planning faces significant challenges posed by the lack of effective information, systems and a framework to organise that information. Such a framework is critical in order to make accessible and informed decisions for planning healthy cities. The challenges have been exaggerated by the rise of the healthy cities movement, as a result of which, there have been more frequent calls for localised, collaborative and evidence-based decision-making. Some studies suggest that the use of ICT-based tools in health planning may lead to: increased collaboration between stakeholder sand the community; improve the accuracy and quality of the decision making process; and, improve the availability of data and information for health decision-makers as well as health service planners. Research has justified the use of decision support systems (DSS) in planning for healthy cities as these systems have been found to improve the planning process. DSS are information communication technology (ICT) tools including geographic information systems (GIS) that provide the mechanisms to help decision-makers and related stakeholders assess complex problems and solve these in a meaningful way. Consequently, it is now more possible than ever before to make use of ICT-based tools in health planning. However, knowledge about the nature and use of DSS within collaborative health planning is relatively limited. In particular, little research has been conducted in terms of evaluating the impact of adopting these tools upon stakeholders, policy-makers and decision-makers within the health planning field. This paper presents an integrated method that has been developed to facilitate an informed decision-making process to assist in the health planning process. Specifically, the paper describes the participatory process that has been adopted to develop an online GIS-based DSS for health planners. The literature states that the overall aim of DSS is to improve the efficiency of the decisions made by stakeholders, optimising their overall performance and minimizing judgmental biases. For this reason, the paper examines the effectiveness and impact of an innovative online GIS-based DSS on health planners. The case study of the online DSS is set within a unique settings-based initiative designed to plan for and improve the health capacity of Logan-Beaudesert area, Australia. This unique setting-based initiative is named the Logan-Beaudesert Health Coalition (LBHC). The paper outlines the impact occurred by implementing the ICT-based DSS. In conclusion, the paper emphasizes upon the need for the proposed tool for enhancing health planning.
About the Presenters

Ori Gudes

Mr. Ori Gudes holds a M.A. in GIS from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. He has a diverse knowledge of GIS and over eight years of work experience in private consulting, government and academia in Israel. He is currently a research fellow and GIS analyst at Griffith University and a PhD student at the School of Urban Development, Queensland University of Technology Brisbane, Australia. The main foci of his research are developing web-based decision support systems for urban planning and healthy cities promotion. These two broad research areas are clustered around several themes: web-based decision support systems, urban development, public participation and health planning. Mr. Gudes received an award (2007) for his M.A. work from the Israeli Planning Association.

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