

Clinical data transmission from hospital to GP's. An ethnographic research.

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Purpose

In 2007 has started in Trentino (Italy) a project called Ampere: a new network to send clinical data from hospitals to GP's. This study is a brief analysis of the impact of Ampere project in the GP's practice.

Design and Methods

The study has been carried out using a qualitative methodology: the case studies research. The normal work of four GP's has been actively observed for a week, following the ethnographic research rules. Doctors have been chosen by a theoretical sampling process using both geographical (working in city or rural town) and IT skills (good or poor) criteria. Taken notes have been catalogued with focus on innovative elements and criticalities.

Results

Preliminary results show that clinical data received from hospital have been useful to permit a better knowledge of clinical situation, diagnostic paths and therapeutic decisions of assisted patients. In some cases the Ampere project permitted even a faster diagnosis and treatment, with a positive outcome in patient's health and satisfaction. The study shows also some open problems. Some of most important unresolved issues are: obtaining agreement to treatment of personal details, storing data and protecting privacy.

Conclusions

The electronic medical reports transmission from hospital has a remarkable effect to the GP's work, often with a positive feedback, but this new tool involves deep changes in habits, spaces organization and IT skills. The study shows also some criticalities as the difficulty of managing the increasing number of information and privacy safeguard. Extending the number of observed GP's could be useful to improve the knowledge of potentials and limits of the Ampere project.