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**Nuove esperienze in medicina generale:
l'introduzione della posta elettronica
nell'organizzazione del servizio
del medico di medicina generale**

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Abstract

Una scelta organizzativa può condizionare notevolmente la qualità dell'intero servizio erogato. Questa tesi si propone di studiare l'introduzione di una nuova tecnologia nel lavoro quotidiano di un medico di medicina generale – l'uso della posta elettronica con i pazienti – cercando di riflettere su elementi raccolti dalla letteratura e dall'analisi di un'esperienza conosciuta direttamente.

La revisione, non sistematica, della letteratura è stata condotta su fonti secondarie e primarie raccolte soprattutto nel database Medline, selezionando i soli articoli riguardanti la comunicazione elettronica tra medici e pazienti che si conoscono (cosiddetta relazione di tipo B) e nell'ambito delle cure primarie; pur essendo un argomento dibattuto da circa 15 anni, in particolare negli Stati Uniti, gli studi originali trovati sono limitati nel numero, nelle dimensioni e nella qualità, causando una scarsità di evidenze disponibili sull'argomento. Ciò riflette l'esistenza di molti timori – in gran parte senza un riscontro empirico – da parte dei medici, che stentano a rispondere alla domanda crescente del pubblico di usare la tecnologia Internet, sempre più diffusa, anche a tale scopo. La scelta di un tale servizio può presentare rischi ma anche vantaggi insospettabili che necessitano di approfondimenti mirati e ben condotti: esempi dei primi sono la violazione della privacy, il notevole aumento del carico di lavoro e la non risposta immediata a situazioni urgenti; esempi dei secondi il miglioramento di efficienza, della comunicazione, della continuità assistenziale e dell'empowerment.

Nella seconda parte della tesi viene presentato il servizio di posta elettronica rivolto ai pazienti allestito in una medicina di gruppo di Trento. Dopo una rapida descrizione dell'infrastruttura e delle modalità operative, è stato condotto uno studio quantitativo dei flussi di e-mail entranti sull'archivio di tutte le e-mail sistematicamente memorizzate dall'istituzione del servizio e un'analisi qualitativa del loro contenuto su un campione appositamente estratto dall'archivio. I risultati confermano alcuni aspetti della letteratura (carico di lavoro crescente), ne confutano altri (presunta creazione di disuguaglianze nell'accesso, smentita in parte dall'arrivo di più di un quarto

delle e-mail da delegati di assistiti) e ne introducono di inediti (andamento stagionale, settimanale e orario dei flussi; quota di e-mail gestibili da collaboratrici; quota di messaggi e/o allegati meritevoli di archiviazione). Altre peculiarità significative sono le dimensioni (totalità della popolazione assistita, di circa 6000 pazienti) e la durata pluriennale. Questi dati avvalorano le scelte compiute nella Practice esaminata, come l'impiego di una collaboratrice preposta nelle ore mattutine e l'adozione di regole estrapolate dall'esperienza.

In conclusione, il lavoro è servito per rivalutare la posta elettronica come elemento non secondario e organicamente integrato nell'organizzazione complessiva di un ambulatorio di medicina generale, con inoltre interessanti risvolti didattici.

VII. BIBLIOGRAFIA

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