New health information system will be able 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 patients 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 be easily transferred from one hospital to another without loss, even outside of the country thanks to specific agreements between the hospitals. The new system promises to reduce losing data, saving time and money, decreasing the waiting time for medical appointments but most importantly has the ability to provide international medical consultation.

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 and e-health applications in the region, the importance of information at the point of care, patient safety and care quality, were the hottest issues discussed during the event. The leading solution providers as well as decision makers from the healthcare industry 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, discussed a cost-effective and effective method of implementing e-Health services for the population of the UAE requires fulfilling the actual requirements and objectives of the program. Certainly in today’s world there exists the technical capability to deliver meaningful clinical applications suitably 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 credibility of the proposed solutions, with stated objectives for improved care, workflow processes and increased effectiveness of medical care possible. These ‘health-care business-level’ objectives can then be translated to technical solutions with requirements designed and implemented to meet them.

How to ensure patient safety?

Patient safety is and should be the most important consideration for delivering quality healthcare services. 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 IT health 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 established 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 Ori, 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 VISEIC, which combines early warning software and remote monitoring to connect off-site critical care physicians and nurses to ICU patients at all times.

The eICU Program provides an alternative way to deliver high-quality critical care when specialist resources are limited. The eICU is also designed to help bedside teams work over their sickest patients and to prioritize treatment in critical care patients. The evidence is growing that eICU programs are having a proven impact on saving lives, reducing complications as well as the length of patient stays, especially in the countries where people have limited and unequal resources in healthcare services.

Implementation of e-Health services enables the equal distribution to high tertiary care to all citizens of Saudi Arabia, easy accessibility to healthcare services and education through e-health networks, cost effectiveness and efficiency for the healthcare system, by utilizing high sophisticated e-health technology and information.

Availability of healthcare services, 24/7, and transmission of all kind of medical and administrative events to as many as possible. Such capabilities could be, noted Dr. Fahad Bin Saleh Al Ori.

His message for UAE health authorities was: ‘Sharing the recent advancements in technologies could avoid a lot of hiccups, while running the system and building the right infrastructure for the Abu Dhabi application. Investing in broad bandwidth will let such applications require heavy data exchange possible,’ he added.

The Government’s point of view:

His Excellency Mohammad Al Abi Ab, the head of Radiology from the Ministry of Health mentioned that the system of e-health facilitate will enable both patients and doctors across the country to make quick and well-informed decisions as well as ensuring the quality of treatment. At this point, training the staff on the new e-health applications, upgrading and maintaining the data base are vital factors for the sustainable safety of patients.

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 series in the Middle East as well as in Europe.

Abu Dhabi seeks to privatise some services

The Abu Dhabi government is seeking external investment in its 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 public finances, which consist of all kind of medical and administrative events to as many as possible. Such capabilities could be, noted Dr. Fahad Bin Saleh Al Ori.

First Cyberknife system installed in Saudi hospital

Over 28% of Qatar children diabetic

Oman Healthcare City plans dropped

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Kuwaiti-based Gulf Investment House has announced that it has abandoned plans to develop a $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, and hospitals, were dropped.