Telemedicine: Its true meaning and value

Telemedicine worldwide is used innovatively in various applications. The most common purpose is obviously for ensuring that health care gets delivered to people in the remotest regions of the world. Most of the Asian countries are in dire need of telemedicine. "It is more needed in countries like Pakistan, India and Africa than developed countries like USA and UK", Dr. Zakiuddin Ahmed, CEO of eHealth Services (Pvt.) Ltd., Pakistan, communicates to the world. Dr. Ahmed is the telemedicine consultant and expert from Pakistan. He represents Pakistan in respect to eHealth and telemedicine at various forums to the world.

The man with more than 10 years experience in telemedicine field, is very well known to the world telemedicine community as "Dr. Zaki". With his great telemedicine insight, he convinced NGOs and government agencies in Pakistan to go ahead for pilot project implementation. In November 2003 he visited India to meet telemedicine companies for possible tie up. For the same reason he communicated with various telemedicine companies worldwide including companies from USA, UK etc. Amongst all the available solutions, it was going to be an uphill task to convince Dr. Ahmed for Medisoft in the year of 2003, since Medisoft was a relatively new player and it had just launched its innovative telemedicine system Tele Doctor v1.0.

The success of our product can be attributed to the time we invested in the market research by conducting voluntary interviews of a number of different practitioners; professionally ranging from general practice to almost all specialties and geographically ranging from the urban centers to the remotest regions. Our market research showed that none of the existing telemedicine systems were able to fulfill the field requirements. While developing Tele Doctor we always kept this in mind and were determined to fill the void created by the lack of a satisfactory product. We have made every effort to make Tele Doctor a most stable telemedicine system.

We have offered our evaluation version for medical practitioners to download from our website. This not only provides easy accessibility to those who want to try our product but it also establishes a self-check mechanism for Medisoft to gauge the ease of use of this software for the general user.

In this case, Dr. Ahmed was able to download and install the demo easily. He also found it easy to operate independently without our assistance. Thereafter, Dr. Ahmed collectively sent his technical queries to Medisoft which were answered promptly to his satisfaction. Finally in DEC 2004, Medisoft received a confirmation from eHealth. The installation went very smoothly using the installation manual, without our physical presence and only our remote support, thus saving eHealth, a good amount of money in installation, implementation and training.

This installation proved to be a landmark in telemedicine history since at no point was a physical presence of any of our members required at the installation site. This also, justified telemedicine's true meaning and was a shot in the arm for Medisoft's progress. The system has been working very efficiently so far and the team at eHealth has made optimal use of its potential. Barely 5 months after its first installation, eHealth practically realized the advantage of telemedicine and decided to expand the project by adding 4 more centers. Thereafter in Feb '06, this was followed with an expansion order for 6 more centers, which in conclusion put 12 Telemedicine centers forming one of the biggest networks of telemedicine worldwide. Around the same time Medisoft launched the updated Tele Doctor v2.0 – truly DICOM compatible. Medisoft has always believed that the feedback from the users is the single most important parameter to improve the quality of a product. Henceforth, it has been our policy to provide customization to customers at no additional cost. In addition to this, we have always ensured that our clients get the benefit of any latest updates. Keeping this in mind, we have updated all the centers with the advanced Tele Doctor 2.0.

The network of 12 telemedicine units works very efficiently. The operators at those centers transfer 80-100 patient's data collectively on a daily basis. Most patients include cardiology, radiology and dermatology followed by neurology, pathology and all other disciplines.

Inspired with this great success Dr. Zaki and his eHealth team now plans to develop a network of telemedicine units across Pakistan with a vision that anybody from Pakistan can access telemedicine services within 30 minutes even from the remotest location, which will be a significant achievement and a role model to follow.

http://www.medisofttelemedicine.com
http://www.ehealthopinion.com