

Newsletter No. 2

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Dear Reader,



You have picked up the second issue of PrimCareIT newsletter. PrimCareIT is a flagship project within the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013, aiming at motivating health professionals to work in remote primary health care with ICT technology.

In this newsletter issue, you can find an article from our first tele-consultation pilot site in Blekinge County, Sweden, as well as information on other recent and upcoming project activities.

For further information, visit our website at www.primcareit.net. We hope that you will also return to the following issue again in six months!

Sami Penälä

Lead Partner

Project goals at a glance

PrimCareIT – Connecting and supporting health care professionals via ICT

- Motivate health care professionals to work in rural areas
- Promote equal access to health services
- Implement virtual communication solutions
- Eliminate barriers of distance
- Foster sustainability of telemedicine



Flagship project

PrimCareIT was selected as a flagship project of the EU Strategy. These flagship projects contribute to maintaining and reinforcing the attractiveness of the Baltic Sea Region. Find more information [on the website](#).

Lithuanian University of Health Sciences

Country: Lithuania

Number of staff: about 2600

Functions: higher education, research, provision of health care.

The Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LUHS) is the largest full university type higher education institution in the field of biomedical sciences in Lithuania. LUHS consists of two main subdivisions: the Medical Academy and the Veterinary Academy. There are seven faculties, six scientific institutes and three hospitals and more than 7000 students. The University is offering 22 study programmes in ten disciplines.

LUHS is the founder of telemedicine and eHealth research in Lithuania, working in the field since 1962. In the university structure there are two departments (telemedicine and distance learning) and one research institute laboratory working in the field of telemedicine and eHealth. LUHS researchers are currently involved in many national and international projects in the field. LUHS is a member of international organisations, such as: International Society for Telemedicine & eHealth (ISfTeH), European Distance and E-Learning Network (EDEN), European Association of Healthcare IT Managers (HITM), LieDM.

Institute of Clinical Medicine of the Tallinn Technical University

Country: Estonia

Number of staff: 2000

Function: healthcare technology research, e-health applications

Tallinn University of Technology is Estonia's largest technical university with 14,000 students (including 800 foreign students), 2,000 employees, 8 faculties and 10 institutions (including 4 regional colleges). The Institute of Clinical Medicine (ICM) was established in 2007. The Institute operates as a science, study and development establishment in the medical field. The Institute is the leading research facility in healthcare technology and e-health applications in Estonia.

ICM participates in PrimCareIT as a partner. Its competence is an analysis of healthcare professionals' demands and behaviour using data related to e-health services and investigation of trends in medicine, public health and social care based on the pervasive access to the comprehensive nationwide health databases.

Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia

Country: Finland

Number of staff: 32

Function: Regional development

The Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia (RCSO) is a statutory federation of municipalities consisting of 19 municipalities. The RCSO acts as a developer and broker organisation maintained by municipalities. The organisation functions as a public authority and development organization affecting regional planning and regional decision making. There are experts working in the spheres of competition. The office has areas of responsibility in cooperation and networking, regional development, regional planning, internationalisation and cultural development. Our objective is a competitive, cooperative region known for high-level education, know-how and welfare and entrepreneurship.

The RCSO has experience in several (inter)national eHealth projects. As project partner in the PrimCareIT project the RCSO will raise the awareness of the project among most important stakeholders and organize policy involvement for deployment of tele-consultation and tele-mentoring.

First pilot: Making the consultation aspect work

It is now almost a year since the PrimCareIT project was launched with the aim of raising the attractiveness of remote primary health care for medical professionals by means of tele-consultation and tele-mentoring for more equal access to primary health care in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR).

The idea that a better deployment of tele-consultation and tele-mentoring between health professionals within the primary care field and relevant hospital specialists can reduce professional isolation and provide opportunities for professional networking and education, is planned to be tested in several pilot sites in remote areas of five different countries within the Baltic Sea Region.

Launch of the first pilot

The first pilot "Tele-consultation between Blekinge Wound Centre and primary care actors" in Sweden has now been launched and is currently focused on initiating tele-consultation between Ronneby Primary Health Care Centre and Blekinge Wound Centre for the consultation on wound assessment, treatment and health promoting patient care.

"Making the consultation aspect work is the important part in this pilot," says Ewy Olander,

researcher at Blekinge Institute of Technology and responsible for the implementation of this first pilot. "The next step will be to involve another Primary Health Care Centre in a multi-consultation and focus on Collegial Tutoring." Blekinge Wound Centre had early on expressed an interest in participating in the project, having previously been involved in tests concerning consultation from a distance in the Centre for Telemedicine project. A close connection to the primary health care field in addition to expertise used by all primary health care clinics in the county made Blekinge Wound Centre a suitable candidate for the pilot study.

Positive feedback

The attitude has so far been altogether positive from the professionals involved. According to Ewy Olander, a contributing factor to this is that even if the aim of the study is focused on the evolvement of the profession, the professionals involved are naturally also intent on the patients' well-being and see this as something that can ultimately benefit the treatment and care for the patients as well.

The launch of the project has of course not been without obstacles. Involving the right people, getting equipment set up, working and coordinating with the IT department at



Nikolai Gvozdenko, Belarus:
"I am participating in PrimCareIT because I have the occasion to share my experience how to organise the implementation of modern technologies into primary health care."

the County Council are some of the challenges that have had to be resolved. "But that's all part of the implementation," says Ewy Olander "and at the end of the day it's also a valuable experience for the project."

"It is great that we now have the first pilot up and running!" says Tobias Larsson, professor and project leader of the work package at Blekinge Institute of Technology. "The already established collaboration between the actors has made it less troublesome to get started, and now we start looking for the deployment of the other pilots within the PrimCareIT project."

How to raise the political awareness

Medical planners in all our countries find it hard to recruit and retain staff at the primary care level in remote areas. This means an obvious risk for future depletion of healthcare services.

Strategies and policies must be found to guarantee sustainable healthcare delivery. One working group of our project (work package 6) focuses on making politicians and other key persons in each country aware of the situation and to offer them the opportunity to take part in project activities to share knowledge and ideas produced in the project.

Finding and motivating stakeholders

During the autumn 2012 all partners have worked on finding the crucial stakeholders in their country. We have tried to find people from a broad field of interest such as politicians, policy makers, representatives from medical associations, telemedicine departments, IT e-health companies, universities and key professionals. A list of more than one hundred stakeholders from all countries was compiled and will be updated in the future. Selected persons from each of the groups have been contacted, informed and offered the opportunity to take part in the project. The response has been great!

Contact in your region

All project partners can now contact any of the stakeholders in their region/country and invite them to suitable project activities or form local forums/panels for discussing the local situation. In return we identified contact persons within our project – available for more information about our activities and potential cooperation. The names can be found below:

Belarus

- ✉ [Nikolai Gvozd](#)
Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education

Estonia

- ✉ [Kristjan Krass](#)
Estonian Society of Family Doctors

Finland

- ✉ [Jaakko Hallila](#)
Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia
- ✉ [Helli Kitinoja](#)
Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences

Germany

- ✉ [Prof Bosco Lehr](#)
Flensburg University of Applied Sciences
- ✉ [Katrin Olenik](#)
Flensburg University of Applied Sciences

Latvia

- ✉ [Gatis Zvaigzne](#)
National Health Service

Lithuania

- ✉ [Prof Arūnas Lukoševičius](#)
Kaunas University of Technology
- ✉ [Assoc. Prof Giedrius Vanagas](#)
Lithuanian University of Health Sciences

Sweden

- ✉ [Käte Alrutz](#)
County Council of Västerbotten



Literature review shows the state of the art

The literature review on health care systems, definitions of primary health care, professional isolation and brain drain as well as the prevalence of tele-consultation and tele-mentoring in the seven partner countries was finalised by the project partners. The review gives an overview of the state of the art in the seven partner countries Belarus, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden.

The review showed that the state of the art in the countries is still on different levels. There have been some kinds of tele-consultations or tele-mentoring solutions used in all countries. But especially topics such as the effects on the health care system or the weighting of factors leading to brain drain have not been considered in most of the countries.

Contact:



[Prof Bosco Lehr](mailto:Prof.Bosco.Lehr@flensburg-university.de)

Flensburg University of Applied Sciences,
Germany

The Work packages

No.	Work packages name	Project partner	Leader
1	Project Management and Administration	South Ostrobothnia Health Care District	Sami Perälä
2	Communication and Information	Vilnius University Hospital Santariškių Klinikos	Domantas Stundys
3	Needs and strategies to counteract brain drain and professional isolation in remote primary health care through tele-consultation and tele-mentoring	Flensburg University of Applied Sciences	Prof Bosco Lehr
4	Implementation of tele-consultation for improved professional cooperation and quality in remote primary health care (pilots)	Blekinge Institute of Technology	Prof Tobias Larsson
5	Implementation of tele-mentoring for career development of health professionals in remote primary health care	The Estonian Society of Family Doctors	Kristjan Krass
6	Political awareness of strategies to ensure high quality and accessible services in remote primary health care by the means of eHealth	Blekinge Institute of Technology	Prof Johan Berglund

The Project Partners

Click for more information.

- South Ostrobothnia Health Care District
- Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences
- Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia
- Kauhava Primary Health Care District
- eHealth Institute, Linnaeus University
- Blekinge Institute of Technology
- County Council of Västerbotten
- Flensburg University of Applied Sciences
- The Estonian Society of Family Doctors
- Institute of Clinical Medicine of the Technomedicum of the Tallinn Technical University
- Vilnius University Hospital Santariškių Klinikos
- Kaunas University of Technology
- Lithuanian University of Health Sciences
- State Educational Institution Belarusian Medical Academy of Post-Graduate Education
- Ostrovec Central Regional Hospital
- National Health Service



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Design

b+c computergraphik GmbH

Käte Alrutz, Sweden:

"I am participating in PrimCareIT because it is important to find and evaluate new possible ways to support medical staff at primary health care level in rural areas and at the same time lift the needs of patients with psychogeriatric disorders."



For more information please go to

www.primcareit.net