Telecare implementation
Monitoring patients with long-term conditions

Greece

Rural communities around the world share a common problem: they lag behind urban areas in their level of access to healthcare services. This can be caused by a shortage of healthcare professionals prepared and able to work in remote areas, their geographical distance from the nearest medical facilities, and a lack of appropriate resources.

This can result in protracted waiting times for appointments with relevant specialists at regional medical centres. The problem is exacerbated by the higher proportion of older citizens often resident in rural communities – many with chronic diseases – who have to travel long distances for care. Greece is one country facing such challenges. Vodafone has implemented a Telecare solution to help provide ongoing care to patients with chronic diseases. The solution uses mobile communications to facilitate exchanges between specialist physicians and the local general practitioner. The system aims to deliver cost-saving efficiencies through faster diagnoses and proactive monitoring of conditions and symptoms in order to prevent health escalations and support better patient outcomes.
**Benefits**

**Improved access to care**
All citizens, regardless of location, can enjoy parity in the level of healthcare services they receive. Geographical location no longer dictates quality of service.

**Increased quality of life**
Particularly important for elderly patients is the peace of mind they gain from knowing they have regular access to specialist medical practitioners.

**More efficient use of resources**
Telecare by its nature is more cost-effective than running local clinics. Hospital-based medical staff can be more productive, fitting in reviews and consultancy for remote patients as their agenda dictates. There will be less wastage from missed appointments.

**Knowledge sharing**
Consultation and collaboration between local general practitioners and specialist staff helps disseminate skills and expert knowledge so that in future local medical staff may undertake more primary care, diagnosis, and care planning.

**Workflow description**
Each local primary health unit is equipped with vital signs telemonitoring devices. The patient’s family physician then regularly records various vital signs relating to the chronic disease being monitored. In the case of this implementation, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases are included.

Data is transmitted to a central web server in real time using GPRS. It is dropped into the relevant patient’s central records which are stored securely and updated with new information automatically. Specialists assigned to each respective patient in Athens can access those records and test results to provide advice and, where necessary, diagnoses to the family physician.

**Further information**
For more detail on this project, including a user testimonial video, email us at vodafonemhealth@vodafone.com or visit mhealth.vodafone.com

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