

WHO Collaborating Centre for Telemedicine

Annual report for 2003-2004

Tove Sørensen

Title: WHO Collaborating Centre for Telemedicine
Annual report for 2003-2004

NST-report:

Authors: Tove Sørensen

ISBN:

Date: 2004-09-13

Number of pages: 12

Keywords: World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Telemedicine

Summary:

Publisher: Norwegian Centre for Telemedicine
University Hospital of North Norway
P.O. Box 35
N-9038 Tromsø
Telephone: (+47) 77 75 40 00
E-mail: info@telemet.no
Web: www.telemet.no

This report may be freely distributed as long as the source is stated. The user is encouraged to state the name and number of the report, that it is published by the Norwegian Centre for Telemedicine, and also that the report in its entirety is available at www.telemet.no.

Preface

This report is prepared in August 2004 and summarizes the work performed by the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Telemedicine in 2003-2004 in relation to the Terms of Reference.

In general, most activities are funded by internal means. A project-group of five people is allocated to WHO-CC issues in addition to a full-time WHO-CC co-ordinator.

Table of contents

1.	Activities 2003-2004	7
1.1	Workshop on Evaluation methods, 13 September 2003	7
1.2	Scientific review study on evaluation methods in telemedicine / eHealth	7
1.3	Mission to Georgia 26-30 September 2003	7
1.4	Guidelines for a Country feasibility study	7
1.5	WHO-European survey on eHealth Consumer Trends	8
1.6	Global Telemedicine Partnership	8
1.7	Distance education	8
1.8	eHealth for health care delivery – contribution to WHO HQ strategy	8
1.9	Tromsø Telemedicine and eHealth Conference, TTC 2003 and TTeC 2004	9
1.10	Participation to proposal to EU-Public Health	9
2.	Recommendations	9
3.	Related activities	9
4.	Collaboration between the centre and WHO	11
4.1	Visits by WHO staff (headquarters and/or Regional Office) to the Norwegian Centre for Telemedicine:	11
4.2	Visits by the centre staff to WHO (headquarters and/or Regional	11
4.3	Use of the centre staff by WHO	11
4.4	Support provided by centre staff for courses co-sponsored or organized by WHO (headquarters and/or Regional Office)	11
4.5	WHO financial support to the centre through contractual or technical services agreement	12
4.6	Collaboration with other WHO collaborating centres	12
4.7	Other	12

1. Activities 2003-2004

The following activities have been conducted between July 2003 through July 2004, listed in chronological order.

Dissemination has been a priority area since the designation as a WHO Collaborating centre. A dedicated website for WHO-CC activities has been developed and a new design made, at www.telemet.no/who. Further information on the activities mentioned below can be found here.

The WHO logo has been integrated in the NST profile. Two “roll-ups” have been produced, one for use by WHO HQ. NST participated in the World Health Assembly in Geneva, 17-22 May, and provided material for the exhibition and the technical briefing on eHealth.

1.1 Workshop on Evaluation methods, 13 September 2003

An international group of 26 people participated in a full-day workshop on evaluation methods in Tromsø 13 September 2003. The aim of the workshop was to discuss different approaches for evaluating telemedicine / eHealth services and to develop recommendations on good practice in the area. A compendium was produced for the workshop participants. The workshop was organized as a joint WHO-NST initiative. Participants paid their own expenses. The preparation and other costs were covered by internal means.

1.2 Scientific review study on evaluation methods in telemedicine / eHealth

As a follow-up activity of the workshop, the work on a review article on evaluating telemedicine projects and services started in April 2004. The research study is undertaken by the NST in collaboration with Michigan State University, USA. A total of 19 scientific databases have been searched for articles from 1990 to May 2004. The aim is to publish the study in BMJ in the beginning of 2005. The study will serve as a background to offer recommendations for future telemedicine research strategies and to further knowledge in the field. The data will be a basis for further research in the field. The total cost of the study is NOK 992,000. So far, the project has been funded by NST only.

1.3 Mission to Georgia 26-30 September 2003

A mission to Georgia was conducted in September 2003 with the aim to investigate the possibilities for a WHO pilot project on telemedicine in the country. There were meetings with the Georgian Ministry of Health, universities, hospitals and other institutions. Due to the dramatic political changes in the country in October, the report and follow-up actions have been delayed. The mission was funded by WHO-Euro.

1.4 Guidelines for a Country feasibility study

The Guidelines for a country feasibility study have been prepared upon request from WHO-Euro. To our knowledge, the document has been used in Bangladesh, Georgia and Sri

Lanka. The Guidelines were translated and adapted for use in the Norwegian health care regions. The work was paid by WHO on a APW contract.

1.5 WHO-European survey on eHealth Consumer Trends

The NST has co-ordinated a project proposal for EU, "WHO/European survey on eHealth consumer trends". The output of the evaluation was positive, although the funding is not granted as there were too many projects accepted.

A joint workshop was held on 10-11 May 2004, hosted by WHO-Euro. Experts from a total of eight countries participated. The aim of the workshop was to develop the survey further, e.g. to agree upon common methods and questions for a survey which will ensure comparable data-sets. Key issues of the study will include social gap related to the digital divide, public health, trust and monitoring.

The WHO/European survey is a further development and expansion of a Norwegian annual survey on e-Health consumer trends, conducted by the NST over the past three years. The purpose of the Norwegian survey is to monitor health consumers' use of, their attitudes to and their needs with regards to information and communication technology for health purposes.

1.6 Global Telemedicine Partnership

Over the last year, efforts have been made to establish the Global Telemedicine Partnership which is now scheduled to the end of the year. The aim of the partnership is to reduce the digital divide between the haves and have-nots within and between nations. Further, the aim is to encourage telemedicine projects and services in developing countries and under-served regions. The programme will support studies, projects and activities. The ambition is to allocate 5-10 million euros every year. Establishing the partnership is made by NST internal funding.

1.7 Distance education

Upon request from WHO, NST has written a chapter for a booklet on distance training for health care professionals. The booklet has not been published yet. Therefore, the material has been published at our web-site. The work is undertaken by internal funding.

Two articles on distance education has been submitted ofr publication in "Education technology and Society", edited by Riga Technical University and supported by the "Distance learning Task Force".

1.8 eHealth for health care delivery – contribution to WHO HQ strategy

The collaborating centre has contributed to the development of an eHealth strategy for health care delivery in WHO HQ. Costs have been partly covered by WHO HQ.

1.9 Tromsø Telemedicine and eHealth Conference, TTC 2003 and TTeC 2004

In September 2003, 380 participants from 32 nations came to TTC 2003: Global Telemedicine and eHealth - potential and dilemmas. Dr. Mila Garcia Barbero gave a one of the key-note presentations on the first day.

In June 2004, the TTeC 2004 was arranged. The conference was about people using eHealth for their own health purposes and a meeting place for exchanging knowledge and debating strategies between the key players in eHealth. A key-note presentation was given by Dr Steffen Groth, WHO HQ and a special session on "eHealth bridging the gap" was organized in collaboration with WHO.

1.10 Participation to proposal to EU-Public Health

The project, "eHealth for Health Care Delivery" was coordinated by WHO –HQ with several partners. NST described two work-packages. The proposal was rejected.

2. Recommendations

Some of the activities described will be continued according to the Work Plan 2004-2006. We see no need to revise the Terms of Reference, except for combining no 4 and 6, which we have treated as one item in the work plan. In general, the NST is willing and interested to undertake more activities as a WHO Collaborating Centre, in particular supporting practical telemedicine and eHealth services in the Member states.

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Telemedicine acknowledges the implementation of a WHO initiated telemedicine / eHealth project as a priority area for 2004-2006. It is our opinion that our resources could be utilized more by WHO. We are looking forward to increase the collaboration in the next two years.

3. Related activities

Being a WHO Collaborating Centre, the NST receive several requests from developing countries and economically under-served regions, which we are trying to meet. Among these requests are workshops and feasibility studies as well as requests for internships and visiting scholarship to NST. These activities are mostly funded by internal NST means. Below is a summary of such related activities:

- Afghanistan, Development of an education concept by means of ICT for rural health care personnel .The aim of this project proposal is to develop an education concept for female health care personnel in a country with a low literacy rate, a less developed infrastructure and extensive gender segregation. ICT solutions and interfaces for illiterate people will be explored / developed for the programme. Pre-project was conducted 2003-2004. Due to lack of funding and the instable situation in the country, there are no NST-activities in Afghanistan at the moment.

- Bangladesh. NST was invited to a study tour and a visit and workshop held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in January 2004. The workshop was hosted by Grameen Telecom and organized by Dr. Mannan Mridha, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden and Mr. Masud Isa, Grameen Telecom, Mirpur, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The aim of the workshop and visit was to study the possibilities for telemedicine and distance education in Bangladesh.
- Russia: Competence network to combat tuberculosis. The anti-tuberculosis network in Arkhangelsk County, Russia, supports the WHO model by overcoming distance and improving coordination between healthcare workers introduced to DOTS Plus. The pilot project has been running since early 2001 and is now ended. Today 12 district hospitals and a prison hospital are connected with the Arkhangelsk Regional TB Centre (ARTC). So far the results indicate that the network is used for statistics, distance teaching, administration and second opinions by transferring the patient's statistical forms and digitized radiology images. The project was funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Health.
- Sri Lanka. The NST participated in a feasibility study in May 2004 in order to assess possibilities of assisting Eastern University and Batticaloa Teaching Hospital in Sri Lanka to set up a new Faculty of Health Care Sciences. Telemedicine and distance education is seen as a mean to support the faculty as recruitment of staff is foreseen to be challenging and the need for international support high. The pre-project will be ended and a 10 year programme will be described by the end of 2004. The pre-project is funded by the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
- Bosnia. For several years, the Interventional Centre at the Rikshospitalet University Hospital in Oslo, Norway has assisted in building up a cardiovascular clinic at the University Hospital of Tuzla, Bosnia. The work is supported by the Research Council of Norway, and in addition to local activities it includes an exchange programme for surgeons and other health professionals. The Norwegian Centre for Telemedicine was invited to assist with technical skills for the link-up and implementation of the videoconference. For the first time, clinical teamwork took place across political and ethnic areas.
- eHealth management for people living with HIV/ Aids The HIV/Aids pandemic is one of the largest global health problems. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that around 40 million people are living with HIV worldwide, including 2.5 million children under the age of 15. As a WHO collaborating centre for telemedicine, the NST has been challenged to explore the potentials for telemedicine in health management for people living with HIV/Aids in the developing world. People living with HIV/Aids should be provided quality health services where they live. Not only could telemedicine improve quality of life, it could also enable a more cost-efficient health care system. A concept description has been developed to support and improve the quality of life for people living with HIV/Aids. The concept should explore sustainable telemedicine services for HIV/Aids health management in developing countries, including distance education. The target group is people living with HIV/Aids and their caregivers.

4. Collaboration between the centre and WHO

4.1 Visits by WHO staff (headquarters and/or Regional Office) to the Norwegian Centre for Telemedicine:

13-17 September 2003

Dr Mila Garcia Barbero, WHO-EURO

Ms Irma Velasquez, WHO-HQ

20-23 June 2004

Dr Steffen Groth, WHO-HQ

Ms Irma Velasquez, WHO-HQ

Ms Annick Hadorn, WHO-HQ

Mr Yunkap Kwankam, WHO-HQ

Ms Angela Dunbar, WHO-EURO

Dr Jyotsna Chikersal, WHO-SEARO

4.2 Visits by the centre staff to WHO (headquarters and/or Regional

18 November, Meeting in Copenhagen, WHO-EURO (Dr Steinar Pedersen)

11-13 February 2004, eHealth consultation, WHO-HQ (Ms Tove Sorensen)

10-11 May 2004, Workshop, "eHealth consumer trends", WHO-EURO (Ms Tove Sorensen, Ms Hege Andreassen, Mr Martin Jenssen)

20-21 May 2004, World Health Assembly, WHO-HQ (Dr Steinar Pedersen, Ms Tove Sorensen)

28 June 2004, "Development and testing of an assessment tool for e-health applications for health care delivery", planning meeting, Brussels (Mr. Ernst Kloosterman)

4.3 Use of the centre staff by WHO

Ms Tove Sorensen was applied as a temporary adviser on mission to Georgia, 26-30 September 2003

4.4 Support provided by centre staff for courses co-sponsored or organized by WHO (headquarters and/or Regional Office)

No courses organized by the centre, but an international workshop on evaluation methods was organized by NST in Tromsø, on 13 September 2003.

4.5 WHO financial support to the centre through contractual or technical services agreement

WHO-Euro funded "Guidelines for Country feasibility study", USD 3,000

WHO-Euro funded mission to Georgia, September 2004

WHO HQ funded travel to eHealth consultation in WHO-HQ, February 2004

WHO-Euro hosted a workshop on eHealth consumer trends, Barcelona, May 2004

4.6 Collaboration with other WHO collaborating centres

The NST has been in contact with a few other WHO Collaborating Centres. The NST acknowledge the need for more collaboration in the field. Since we do not know which collaborating centres that would be most appropriate for collaboration, we would need input and suggestions from the WHO.

Research Centre for Health Promotion, University of Bergen, Norway (HEMIL-centre). The two centres are collaborating in research projects and exchange of information and meetings have been arranged over the last year. Also, the HEMIL-centre will be part of the Advisory board for the WHO-European survey on eHealth Consumer Trends.

The National Centre for Fetal Medicine, Trondheim, Norway. Joint meeting has been arranged in order to exchange information and exploring joint areas of collaboration.

Collaboration with All-Russian Center of Emergency and Radiation Medicine (ARCERM) on a telemedicine conference in 2003.

4.7 Other

1 October 2003: Meeting on joint WHO-European Space Agency meeting, ESA headquarter, Paris. Participants: WHO Euro: Dr. Mila Garcia Barbero and Yves Charpak, ESA: Mr. Claudio Mastracci, Mr. Didier Faivre, Mr. Fransesco Feliciani, Mr. Pierluigi Mancini, NST: Ms. Eli Larsen and Tove Sorensen.