

Health 2.0 at IFMSA PreGeneral Assembly – March Meeting 2014 and at Med-e-Tel Conference (The International eHealth, Telemedicine and Health ICT Forum for Education, Networking and Business):

A starting point for raising awareness about the relationship between Information Communication Technology and Health Care among Medical Students

Health care has been deeply transformed by digital revolution at every level and many new paradigms allowed by the application of Electronic Health Records (EHR) and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in medicine are already mainstream in the everyday medical practice. The young students and doctors are expected to have a deep understanding of eHealth and its implications. eHealth topic do not receive the deserved attention by the average medical student, and this is not acceptable in a generation of future doctors that is going to be deeply influenced by these technologies.

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA), decided to advocate to increase the awareness about eHealth among medical students from all over the world together with ISfTeH (International Society for Telemedicine & eHealth). ISfTeH collaboration, from 2013, is supporting the IFMSA technological platform involving students in this new field of health assistance and education – available through the utilization of IT facilities can help reducing the assistance gap in less privilege and remote communities, where not all the current professional expertise and diagnostic equipment is available. Nowadays, Telemedicine and eHealth are important tools to be used in favor of improving the care of patients, with significant impact when implemented in underserved areas of the world. [1]

IFMSA participated at Med-e-Tel event that took place in Luxembourg from 9 to 11th April represented by Omar Cherkaoui (IFMSA New Technologies Support Division Director) and Angelo D'Ambrosio.

The ISfTeH through Med-e-Tel facilitate the international dissemination of knowledge and experience in Telemedicine and eHealth, to provide access to recognized experts in the field worldwide, and to offer unprecedented networking opportunities. Many different stakeholders



were involved in this global event where it was possible be brought face-to-face to share aspirations, learn from research and experiences, show the possibilities, understand the market, discover new applications. The vast conference program featuring over 150 presentations and workshops, allowed to learn from experience built up by experts from around the world: applications and best practice examples, future trends in Telemedicine and eHealth, and their effect on the healthcare system, update on new developments that will allow you to stay ahead and make more effective and efficient use of technologies to improve quality of health, medical and social care.

During the Med-e-Tel conference, IFMSA presented an abstract and a poster, reporting thus how it has tackled the eHealth topic with three initiatives during the 63rd March Meeting in Hammamet, Tunisia: Policy Statement about eHealth has been approved, a three days workshop about eHealth was run in the days before the GA (preGA Health 2.0 Workshop) and a discussion about the role of the IFMSA Technology Officers as first advocates.





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These initiatives have been realized thanks to the collaboration between IFMSA, ISfTeH (International Society of telemedicine and eHealth) and WHO. ISfTeH encourages the involvement of medical students recognizing the potential to facilitate its dissemination. As future professionals, IFMSA students are aware of this new field of assistance and education, which moreover can help in reducing the assistance gap in less privilege and remote countries, where there is lack of expertise and equipment. Non-formal education plays a crucial role for promoting changes and developing key opinion leaders.

IFMSA strongly supports the advancement and accessibility to the use of eHealth, to deliver health and healthcare services and information over large and small distances. We, as IFMSA, believe that the obstacles that currently hold back the further implementation of eHealth, can be dealt with by better collaboration between different stakeholders in the health care sector. All of those actions are necessary also to provide access to eHealth trainings within undergraduate and postgraduate medical education, to offer access to additional trainings in eHealth to practicing physicians, to invest in the widespread of affordable phone and internet coverage as much as possible, to raise awareness on the benefits of eHealth and to invest in infrastructure to provide access to all to participate in eHealth.

Authors:

- *Omar Cherkaoui, IFMSA New Technologies Support Division Director*
- *Ivana Di Salvo, Liaison Officer to Research Medical Associations*
- *Angelo D'Ambrosio*

[1] Memorandum of Understanding IFMSA/ISfTeH