



EUROPEAN UNION OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

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UEMO 2003/176

REPORT ON MEDICAL INFORMATICS UEMO WORKING GROUP

3 October 2003

Cavtat – Croatia

Chairman: Dr. Liam Lynch (Ireland)
Rapporteur: Dr. Steinunn Jonsdottir (Iceland)

Attendance: Ireland - Iceland - Belgium - Finland - UK – Croatia - Hungary

1. Consideration was made of the minutes of the last working group in Stockholm. The minutes were agreed. There were no matters arising.
2. The main discussion surrounded the returned questionnaire on informatics sent out by the Chairman and concluded two main areas:
 - That all patients should have a unique identifiable number which is usable across all information systems
 - That patient confidentiality must be paramount

Detailed analysis will be presented at the next meeting

3. The group decided to focus its work on medical informatics (CPME has already produced an excellent document on telemedicine)

4. A draft discussion paper from Dr Steinunn Jonsdottir on the principles of health information systems in Primary Care was circulated and commented on. The group agreed that a strong primary health care is essential to the future of overall health care in Europe. This will require access to and widespread use of electronic information tools. An integrated health record and information system, although costly and difficult to implement, would provide benefits for clinicians and patients through better clinical care,

UEMO – PRESIDENCY

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and for the healthcare system through better data for policy development and resource allocation. High quality health informatics in the European community will:

- Result in improved communication between clinical professionals
- Improve security and the confidentiality required for patient/client records
- Speed up access to records, sources of knowledge and diagnostic support, requests for tests, and booking of appointments
- Reduce duplication of: records, data items and, through on-line delivery of test results, reduce the need for repeated tests
- Save resource through all of the above

The Health Information System:

- should be developed intentionally rather than accidentally, in a coordinated rather than fragmented manner.
- should build from a primary care and population health base.
- should meet privacy and confidentiality requirements.
- should not be intrusive in the consultation
- should serve the health needs of both the individual and the nation.
- should enable the monitoring of trends, and facilitate health administration and management.
- should improve the effectiveness of health service delivery, both personal care and public health services.

It was decided to circulate the discussion paper to all UEMO members after this meeting for further comments and we intend to present the finished document to the next plenum for adoption.

The UEMO calls on the European governments and health authorities to achieve a comprehensive coordinated and appropriately resourced approach to our health information needs. It will require the involvement and commitment of all the relevant stakeholder groups in health. It is a task to which we believe our governments should now make a firm policy commitment.