

Public Health in the News

Mobile Health Solutions enabling efficient healthcare

The biggest tech trend in Africa, and the one that is making the biggest impact on the everyday lives of people is the rise of smartphones and feature phones. Africa has seen the fastest uptake of mobile devices in the world and **mobile subscribers are set to hit half a billion in the next five years**, according to the GSMA (Groupe Speciale Mobile Association).

This statistic supports the fact that mobile technology is and will continue to be the most powerful communications platform in Africa. Driven by cheaper mobile devices and continued innovation in the mobile space, mobile technology has the power to and will transform the delivery of healthcare service into Africa. The obstacles we face in Africa, however, are the infrastructural challenges that are hindering the adoption of consumer facing apps and limiting integration with local health systems. There is however a way to circumvent these. By implementing apps internally, the responsibility of educating consumers and nurturing widespread adoption is integral. This aids in improving the citizens' healthcare experience without needing their participation.

To adopt mHealth solutions, the facilitation of Electronic Medical Records (EMR) systems need to be deployed. These systems enable health organisations to pull, analyse and share patient medical histories and ultimately integrate these records into mobile health apps.

Currently, most of Africa's healthcare ecosystem encourages citizens to select a variety of doctors and specialists instead of one primary care physician. This makes the consolidation and ownership of medical information a challenging situation in this environment as information is not from one source, but from multiple sources. Inward facing enterprise mHealth apps, which improve the logistical and operational efficiency of healthcare solutions, are potentially an easier way to deliver mobile technology's benefits to patients without having to tackle infrastructural transformation at this stage.

These initiatives improve access to medical supplies, track immunisations, and allow remote diagnostics the potential to transform the entire regional healthcare landscape, resulting in higher referrals, faster diagnoses and a dramatically improved patient experience. Telehealth apps enable citizens in remote areas to access specialised health care professionals in real time. With the assistance of mobile diagnostics, health professionals are able to send test results

from the field and outlying areas and have access to specialised healthcare professionals all over the world. This reduces the need for patients to travel hundreds of kilometres to visit a GP or a specialist.

Enterprise mHealth apps have the capability to enable a "distributed" model of healthcare provision. Allowing healthcare field agents to consult with patients, collect the necessary information and relay it back to specialists to receive treatment recommendations. Taking into account that South Africa has one of the lowest life expectancies in the world, mobile technology could change that and if leveraged correctly it can improve the quality of life and life expectancy of its citizens...

Source: *IT News Africa*, 19 August 2015

WAMTechnology specialises in providing software technology solutions to the health sector to achieve good governance in private as well as public enterprises. Our many successful projects include the development and support of the **Electronic Tuberculosis Register (ETR.Net)** and **Electronic Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis Register (EDRWeb)** – which are the **official software tools** used by the South African National Department of Health's Tuberculosis Control Program, to maintain and analyse registered patients.

EDRWeb

The Electronic Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis Register

What is EDRWeb?

The Electronic Drug Resistant software (EDRWeb) is web-based software that allows authorized users to access a central database and enter data for drug-resistant (DR) TB units. EDRWeb is used for the surveillance and management of DR-TB. Key information is readily displayed to allow for rapid decision making and to determine where interventions are needed.

The Electronic Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis Register

Tool for MDR/XDR Surveillance, Analysis, Program Monitoring and Evaluation

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WAMTech are specialists in implementing technology systems for improved governance, focussing on Water and Public Health Information Systems

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