
EHTEL Says Next Five Years Critical for Mobile Health



The European Health Telematics Association (EHTEL) has said that the period until 2020 is critical for the development of mobile health.

In the newly issued report on its annual 'Thought Leadership Debate' held in Riga during eHealth Week in May, EHTEL brought together key speakers on the issue of mHealth and integrated healthcare under the theme of 'Healthcare on the move: The Mobile Triangle of Health Information'.

Challenged by George Crooks (EHTEL), panellists Guy Eiferman (MSD), Dany Engel (Assuta), Juan Cornet (Mobile World Capital), Peteris Zilgalvis (EC) and the Latvian Health Ministry debated questions like how to best leverage mobile options for patients and health professionals balancing privacy and the promises of Big Data.

The triangle of health information made up of patients, physicians and providers was top of the agenda in a debate with both panellist and audience input.

EHTEL President, George Crooks spoke of the public "going mobile" whether they were at home, on vacation or at work. "In the years to come, mobile devices and the information they exchange are going to be even more powerful," Crooks said.

Eiferman commented on Europe's elderly facing mental health conditions and vulnerable groups dealing with pandemic diseases and the need to upscale mHealth to better support such patients. "It's important to insert here a sense of urgency. We need to do some pretty radical things."

The general consensus was that the next five years is a time for both reflection and action on mHealth from a policy perspective. A closing remark by Cornet summed up the importance of timing. He referred to Catalonia in Spain where efforts to put the patient at the centre of mHealth developments. He cited a 2015 Economist Intelligence Unit report that featured a quote from Young Sohn, President and Chief Strategy Officer of Samsung Electronics. It was: "Now is the right time. Five years ago it was too early. Five years from now, it will be too late."

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