

Hospital Post Europe

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Innovations and Visions for Leaders in Healthcare

IT Solutions for Baltic Countries

The recent Baltic Conference on E-Health in Hamburg presented solutions, best practices, and perspectives for the successful transformation to interconnected, patient-centric healthcare systems.

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Laboratory Equipment for Hospitals

L.A.B. – the biennial trade fair for analysis, bio, and laboratory equipment – came to London, featuring information on most recent research and on equipment currently available.

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Ready to Face the Future?

Only a few days left until Medica opens its doors again in Düsseldorf, Germany. Come and discuss new technologies with the Hospital Post Europe team – Hall 3, Booth G74 and Hall 15, Medica Media. Pre-arrange an interview slot – c.keil@gitverlag.com.



Moving Radiology Ahead

RSNA 2007 – November, Chicago – cf. page 12

The 93rd meeting of the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) takes place 25–30 November in Chicago. Major advances in multislice CT, MR imaging, minimally invasive therapy, and molecular imaging are among the topics of this year's event. "As always, we were blessed with exceptional quality submissions", said Committee Chair Gerald D. Dodd III, M.D. from the University of Texas Health Science Centre. The RSNA Scientific Program Committee and its subcommittees have selected 1,675 papers and 604 posters.

Besides the discussion at the world's largest radiology congress of topics like Breast Imaging, Chest Radiology, and Informatics, Cardiac Radiology continues to rapidly gain attention. Dr. Julsrud, Subcommittee Chair, identified in-stent stenosis via CT angiography, extra-cardiac findings at coronary CT angiography and cardiac MR imaging of left ventricular remodelling as important agenda items this year. Concerning Emergency Radiology, vascular injuries, multidetector



CT, CT angiography accuracy, and contrast agent dosage are in the focus.

Other interesting topics result from the field of Molecular Imaging and include diffusion, hyperpolarized C-13 MR imaging, smart MR agents, and dendritic cell tracking. The RSNA subspecialty Nuclear Medicine is also playing a significant role at this year's meeting. New and important results from the National Oncologic PET Registry (NOPR) will be presented

Excellent studies on image-guided radiation therapy, and the integration of chemotherapy/molecular agents with radiotherapy are topics in the areas of Radiation Oncology and Radiobiology. Vascular and Interventional Radiology mainly focuses on cryoablation of breast tumours, ablation of

the endothelial lining, pulmonary vascular embolism and CD 133 bone marrow stem cells, and angiogenesis with 256-slice CT and simulators. Other subspecialties of this year's event are Genitourinary Radiology, Health Services Policy and Research, Musculoskeletal Radiology, Neuroradiology (Head and Neck), Gastrointestinal Radiology, Paediatric Radiology, and Physics.

According to Health Services Policy and Research Subcommittee Chair Dr. Howard P. Forman, the presentations "will be of the highest calibre" and address topics "that are relevant especially with regard to the "nation's emphasis on healthcare quality improvement".

Christina Keil

High-Tech in Finland



It was 25 years ago when the city of Oulu in Finland, where traditional industries were ailing, took the strategic decision to become a hub of hi-tech and a centre of expertise: Technopolis was founded, offering services for technology companies; further incubator organizations and institutes followed.

These initiatives paved the way for a multitude of companies many of which cater, in particular, for the IT/communications and healthcare markets. Finland is, to them, the ideal testbed because the population is characterized by issues like demography and obesity.

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World of Health IT

After last year's successful event in Geneva, Switzerland, the 2nd edition of the World of Health IT Conference & Exhibition (WHIT) took place in Vienna, Austria, 22–25 October. Around 2000 members of the healthcare delivery community from 64 countries exchanged knowledge and discussed strategies to optimize healthcare systems. WHIT 2007 moved on from exploring fact-based IT solutions to examining health IT in the wider context of health delivery. Read a review and statements from selected exhibitors on pages 22–23.



Early in October, more than 220 researchers, policymakers, and care providers as well as payors from Europe and abroad met in Leipzig to discuss multiple present and future e-health approaches. Technical, medical, and entrepreneurial aspects were on the agenda, and organizers placed a major focus on key success factors and economic viability of new technologies. The 12th rendition of the World Congress on the Internet in Medicine, carried out under the auspices of the Society for Internet and Medicine (SIM)

came to the East German metropolis after last year's event in Toronto, Canada. Technologies discussed ranged from grid computing, Internet portals involving providers and patients to hospital workflow solutions, homecare, and electronic health records.

"... the most remarkable feature of this twenty-first century medicine is that we hold it together with nineteenth-century paperwork" – this memorable statement from Tommy G. Thompson, former Secretary of Health and Human Services, was a discussion opener at Mednet. In his keynote, Dr. Volker Wetekam – who leads Siemens Medical's

The Economics of E-Health

Mednet Calls for Analysis of Viability



Dr. Christian Elsner is 2007 Mednet President and Director of the Centre for Healthcare Management at the Leipzig Graduate School of Management (HHL), this year's congress host.

E-Health, Identity Management, PPP, and Consulting Business – drew on this sentence, emphasizing the relevance of electronic health records for cross-sector savings and quality/safety improvements in healthcare. Castigating his fellow German countrymen for their expressed tardiness in adopting digital information processing technology, Dr. Wetekam explained why other countries make much faster progress: whereas in Germany, technology is developed, but hardly implemented, in other countries existing infrastructure is put to use. "They take what's there, producing results". The German situation isn't really that unpromising, however, as was shown by ...

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Baltic Conference On E-Health

Baltic Sea Region Countries Discuss (IT) Innovation for Health Management

"All our countries, out of necessity, are moving towards a totally new health system", declared Hans Erik Henriksen, IBM manager and healthcare IT expert, in Hamburg recently: "after the fully-financed provider-centric and the budget-checked payor-centric models, what is now coming up is a focus on the patient." Demographic changes, budget constraints, and decreasing healthcare staffing levels pose a threat to the access to care, with increased patient involvement and various types of e-health offerings as likely (part) remedies. – "Learn from each other, work with each other" – the exchange of views and experiences on e-health, and the possible option of co-operating across borders were the drivers for the Baltic Conference on E-Health which convened late September in Hamburg, Germany.

This conference, organized by the U.S. Commercial Service, the Baltic Sea Forum and the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with IBM and with further industry sponsors, provided a cross-sector forum for 150 policy makers and care managers from Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Russia, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and contrastively also with speakers from overseas. It presented concepts and realities, as well as business, medical, and operational aspects of

e-healthcare management. Agenda topics included electronic health records and digital information flow encompassing, e.g., medical information systems, electronic prescriptions, PACS, clinical workflow solutions, patient care devices, and telemedicine.

Why The Baltic?

Representatives from countries bordering the Baltic came to the ancient Hanseatic League city of Hamburg, speakers



Vita Siniciene, Head of IT Division, Ministry of Health, Lithuania, and Hospital Post Europe's Michael Reiter: "Lithuania won't 'leapfrog', but instead 'leap tiger' in e-health"

explained, because pressures are similar and because co-operations – e.g. in telerradiology – are already happening. Why are there marked differences in e-health progress made?

"Putting Simple Tools First"

The countries which are most successful in this drive for e-health are not the ones which aim at implementing the most mod-



VIPs at the reception in Hamburg's U.S. Consulate General – the "Little White House on the Alster" – on the eve of the event



Opinion leaders and policy makers discussing approaches to make our healthcare systems fit for the future: panel at the Baltic Conference on E-Health

providers of care, e.g. GPs and pharmacies exchanging electronic prescriptions. – EU subsidies help finance the scheme.

A patient-centric approach and participation of all stakeholders, the policymaker said, is key for the success of this project. Siniciene's vision is clear: "E-health is the one tool to realize continuity of healthcare access, the one tool to create transparency and reduce cost." Interoperability at an international level, she went on to say, is essential in paving the way for borderless healthcare within the EU.

Knowledge Management a Killer Issue

Managing medical knowledge, declared Prof. Dr. Jörg F. Debatin, Medical Director

and CEO, University Hospital Hamburg-Eppendorf, is a key element of the future in successful research, teaching, and practical care provided by university hospitals. The need for IT to mine this know-how is obvious. In future, "healthcare providers will pull information from a knowledge-base and put together a therapy plan on this basis." Prof. Debatin's outline of "The Future of Health Management" was followed by a controversial panel discussion on current and future challenges for healthcare systems and healthcare management.

The next conference is planned for 2008 again in Hamburg – www.baltic-conference-on-ehealth.com.

Michael Reiter

Learning from the Danish Example



Hans Erik Henriksen is responsible for IBM Healthcare and Life Sciences in the Northern and Eastern part of Europe. He has a 15-year background in healthcare IT; as a consultant, he had the task of establishing the IBM Denmark healthcare IT solution portfolio in the 1990's. Working outside the company for four years, he managed a team which developed the Danish Electronic Patient Record system. "Denmark is a pioneer in electronic information flow in healthcare", summarizes the manager and expert. In the Scandinavian country 12 years ago, the decision was taken to put a halt to staff capacity

waste, and to digitize prescriptions, physician letters, and lab results. For this purpose, one single organization was created to define and install standards – Medcom, a PLC with stakeholders from the healthcare sector on board. Electronic communication was implemented, and physicians found there was no room to hide from this development. "As of 2001, most communication had turned electronic", Henriksen explains. The publicly owned Danish national e-health portal sundhed.dk was installed. "One primary enabler of this project", underlines the manager, "was the unique patient identifier which has been in existence in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden for quite a while". Standards such as HL7, DICOM, and activities of IHE foster developments.

The Danish have succeeded in implementing major first steps towards a healthcare system that is "a national asset, instead of an open-ended, under-funded liability". "Such transformations", Henriksen went on to say, "are the responsibility of the governing bodies of the EU and its member states – a funding policy is essential." You cannot have an oyster dinner and realistically expect to find a pearl which will pay the bill, one conference-goer added. – Lack of reform will upset entire economies; what an amended system could look like a decade from now is described by the IBM study "Healthcare 2015: Win-win or lose-lose?" for which an executive summary is available at www.ibm.com.

ern applications, but those who analyze their legacy systems and build a strategy to drive more value out of those systems. In later phases of that strategy, "you will of course strive to modernize the applications, and use the newest technology in building your infrastructure", a speaker at the conference explained.

Getting nurses and clinicians to use IT is one major stumbling block – today still, it is mostly the secretaries who use these tools despite the fact that healthcare professionals have started complaining about, e.g., cumbersome documentation work which keeps them from spending more time with their patients. It will be beneficial to start out with simple tools to achieve acceptance.

"Lithuania First In E-Health"

The largest and most southerly of the three Baltic republics is among the EU members with the lowest satisfaction of citizens with their national healthcare system, a survey commissioned by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions found a few years ago. The need for improvement was realized. Vita Siniciene, Head of the IT Division in the Lithuanian Ministry of Health, outlined why today, Lithuania is "the strongest in e-health" out of the three republics: Around the year 2000, the situation in the healthcare sector was assessed regarding the flow of information, its gaps and shortcomings. In 2003, requirements for technologies and infrastructure were defined, and EU best practice examples were analyzed. Her country, the policymaker explained, has implemented a national IT core with a strong security layer with classifiers, patient registers, repositories, etc.; as a second step, Lithuanians will build and expand on that core, ensuring interoperability based on standards and laying the basis for information flow between

Sample Solutions from the Exhibit Floor

The German company MCS presented ptp health information networks enabling cross-sector communication, with no portal character and no centralized data repositories. Benefits for acute care are include – according to MCS' Peter Kaufmann – e.g. by fast access to data of a patient who is being treated by various care providers, by fewer duplicate patient exams, and increased quality due to fewer errors. The region of Amberg in Germany is a case in point: more than 80 physicians, three hospitals, and a medical service centre (MVZ) have implemented a communication network of this kind to facilitate communication; labelled "UGOM", this initiative optimizes care for more than 12,000 patients. – The communication of care providers with diagnostic labs is also made significantly easier by such networks, the sales manager went on to explain.

eMedys provides patient bedside terminals solutions (PBT) and services to patients and healthcare professionals based on standard IT, to offer the patient services such as IP telephony, TV, Video on Demand, Internet access, entertainment and medical services, etc. "The PBT's architecture", said eMedys Chief Sales Officer Garbis Bedoian, "can be leveraged to integrate all existing and future clinical applications such as electronic medical records". The company provides a full financial solution which addresses the investment burden of the hospital – it takes over the complete investment, operation, and service required.

Weinmann, a Hamburg-based medical technology company, presented innovative IT solutions like telemedicine. Developers of the company are designing ingenious applications that will make it possible in future to transmit patient data via a wireless interface from a transport ventilator to a defibrillator monitor. The company has entered a strategic partnership with the manufacturer of a defibrillator/monitoring system for this project. "This additional option makes it possible for the first time in emergency medicine to bring together circulatory and respiratory data in a single data terminal. The combination increases the clarity of the situation and convenience for the treating emergency doctor and improves patient prognosis," stated Tobias Drevling, Head of Corporate Communication. – The subsidiary Corscience has been working in recent years on the development of telemonitoring systems which allow remote monitoring of high-risk patients and automatic summoning of help in an emergency. A project in which the weight of heart failure patients was monitored has shown that this method resulted in a 17% drop in mortality. In addition, Corscience is kicking off a completely new telemonitoring project in conjunction with the Hamburg University Hospital in Eppendorf. Within the framework of a study for the German Competence Network on Atrial Fibrillation, patients with arrhythmia will be monitored in an effort to prevent serious complications such as myocardial infarction or stroke.