

## **THE TELEHEALTH SERVICES CODE OF PRACTICE FOR EUROPE: TELESCOPE PROJECT**

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**Key words:** Telemedicine, European Project, COM2008:689

**Abstract:** To present in brief the ongoing TeleSCOPE EC project.

Submitted in May 2009 and led by the Health Design and Technology Institute (Coventry University), the TeleSCOPE project was recommended for funding by the Commission in August 2009.

At the time of the project's preparation and submission, the Bulgarian partner was the Solar-Terrestrial Influences Institute, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. As the Space Research Institute and the Solar-Terrestrial Influences Institute merged in the summer 2010, the project partner is the newly formed Space and Solar-Terrestrial Influences Institute.

The Project started in July 2010 and will end in June 2013. Thirteen partners will combine their efforts to accomplish the project.

TeleSCOPE complies with the European Commission COM2008:689 on telemedicine for the benefit of patients, healthcare systems and society.

The primary objective of TeleSCOPE is to develop a comprehensive Code of Practice for Telehealth Services (i.e. relating to that aspect of telemedicine delivered at home and normally mediated through ICT). The project supports directly EC Action Point (in COM2008:689) to 'improve confidence in and acceptance of telemedicine'. It also contributes to the Action Points to collect 'good practice on deployment of telemedicine services' and the addressing of issues (required for the member-states) on accreditation, privacy and data protection.

## **КОДЕКС НА ДОБРИТЕ ТЕЛЕМЕДИЦИНСКИ ПРАКТИКИ В ЕВРОПА: ПРОЕКТЪТ TELESCOPE**

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**Ключови думи:** Телемедицина, Европейски проект, COM2008:689

**Резюме:** Целта е да се представи накратко проекта TeleSCOPE.

Подаден през май 2009 г. и под ръководството на Health Design and Technology Institute (Coventry University), проектът е одобрен за финансиране от страна на Комисията през август 2009 г.

По време на подготовката и подаването на проекта българският партньор е Институтът по слънчево-земни въздействия към Българска академия на науките. След обединяването на Института за космически изследвания и Института по слънчево-земни въздействия, партньор става новосформираният Институт за космически и слънчево-земни изследвания.

Проектът стартира през юли 2010 г. и ще приключи през юни 2013 година. Тринадесет партньори ще обединят усилията си за изпълнението му.

Проектът TeleSCOPE е в съответствие с документ COM2008: 689 на ЕК относно телемедицината в полза на пациентите, системите на здравеопазването и обществото.

Основната цел на проекта е разработването на цялостен кодекс на добрите практики в областта на електронното здраве и телемедицинските услуги. Проектът пряко подкрепя и плана на ЕК (в COM2008: 689), да „подобри доверието и приема на телемедицината“.

## **Introduction**

The title of the project is *Telehealth Services Code of Practice for Europe* or shortly TeleSCOPE.

A proposal is partially funded under the European Commission (EC) *Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health*. This is EC main instrument for implementing the EU health strategy. The *Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health* focuses on improving citizens' health security; promoting health, including the reduction of health inequalities; and generating and disseminating health information and knowledge throughout the Community.

## **Consistency with EU policy**

TeleSCOPE directly responds to the EC Action Point (in COM2008:689) to “improve confidence in and acceptance of telemedicine” as well as to EC and national agendas (i2020) (2). It also contributes to the Action Points to collect “good practice on deployment of telemedicine services” and the addressing of issues (requiring for member states) around accreditation, privacy and data protection.

The project also fits with European Union (EU) initiatives promoting healthy lifestyles, healthy workforce and healthy life-years, social inclusion and engagement, economic and social development, information and communication technology (ICT) application and the co-ordination of policies and programmes within member states. The context includes i2020, the Ageing Well platform, the eHealth Action Plan, the Green Paper COM2008:725 on a European Workforce for Health.

TeleSCOPE contributes to a number of parameters of the EC “Together for Health” programme, but most especially to health promotion and the reduction of health inequalities; increasing healthy life years and promoting healthy ageing.

In addition, TeleSCOPE reflects:

- The dynamics of EU and global market for products and services relating to telehealth (from large devices to smaller more user friendly devices; from institution to home (and community) use; rapidly changing market for technologies and services);
- Social changes - demographic and social issues (people asserting their right to choose, gain knowledge and expertise ; to have greater access to services and technologies); governments changing funding frameworks - insisting on longer working life, seeking new ways to care for the neediest; emphasizing prevention, better lifestyles and self-support and
- Market growth - EU market size is substantial for Remote Patient Monitoring and Treatment.

## **Partners**

Project duration is 36 months and it will be realized with the joint efforts of thirteen partners from seven EU member states:

- Health Design and Technology Institute, Coventry University (United Kingdom) is the coordinator;
- Space and Solar-Terrestrial Research Institute (Bulgaria)
- Institute of Auxology (Italy)
- CNR ICITE Italian Institute for Construction Technologies (Italy)
- In-HAM Innovation Centre for Housing and Adaptations, NGO (Belgium)
- Work Research Centre (Ireland)
- Telecare Services Association, NGO (UK)
- MEOSZ Hungarian Federation of Disabled Persons Services, NGO (Hungary)
- NSIOS Slovenian Council of Disabled People's Organizations, NGO (Slovenia)
- Lievens-Lanckman, SME (Belgium)
- Apertech Informatics, SME (Hungary)
- MKS Electronic Systems (Slovenia)
- GE Healthcare (Hungary)

## Objectives

The primary objective of TeleSCoPE is to develop a comprehensive *Code of Practice for Telehealth Services* (i.e. relating to that aspect of telemedicine delivered in the home and normally mediated through ICT).

The project relates to an understanding of telehealth services addressing five areas:

- Response and event recognition (using social alarms, fall and seizure detectors),
- Medication compliance (using pill dispensers, pagers, automated prompting),
- Care management (activity monitoring and assessing),
- Disease management (vital signs monitors),
- Health and fitness / Lifestyle (telephone and video consultations).

The context is one where telehealth is seen as facilitating delivery of health related care and support services in people's homes. It is distinct, therefore from telemedicine but carries elements that relate to telecare, telemonitoring and telenursing (fig. 1).

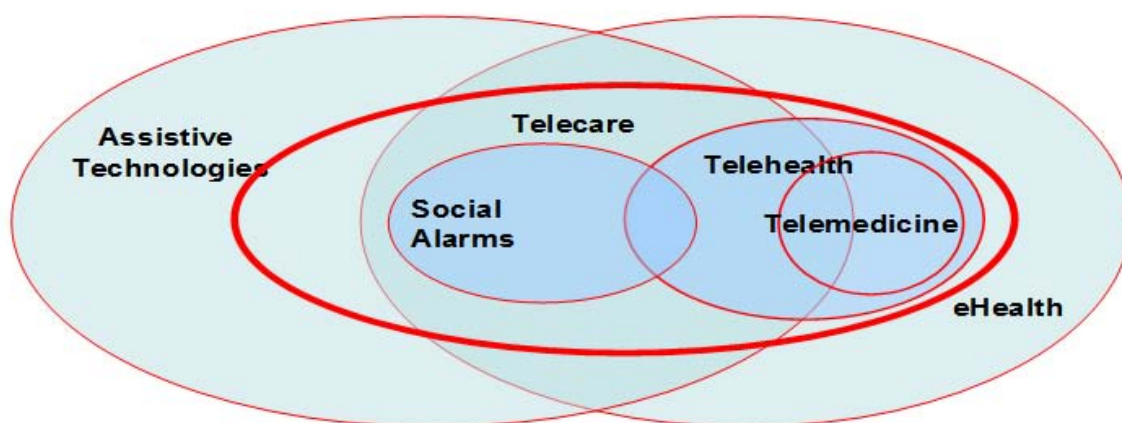


Fig. 1. Telehealth, Telecare and Telemedicine (Fisk 2010)

In more general terms, TeleSCoPE will, through establishing service standards, help establish relationships of trust between patients and providers and contribute to overall health and well-being. The standards will provide a quality benchmark for service regulation in EU member states. Other standards including technical (including interoperability) and information (privacy, etc.) will be referenced.

The Code has to:

- Address aspects of service delivery relating to different configurations; kinds of providers and commissioners; and user (patient) groups;
- Recognises the role of health and allied professionals (including health coaches, pharmacists, telecare staff) in the delivery of telehealth services;
- Recognises beneficiaries – from older and frail people to people with chronic conditions, cognitive, physical and sensory impairments (including dementia and learning disabilities) and/or mental health problems. This range now extends to include lifestyle “challenges” arising from diabetes or obesity to drug and alcohol dependency.
- Address all issues of medication compliance.

The primary means of developing the Code will be through desk-based work, extensive research and consultations with key stakeholders (including government agencies and users (patients)). Governments and appropriate agencies within all member states will be engaged with and their involvement in key fora facilitated. Detailed work with users will be more localised (in some five member states) but will involve the range of patient groups noted above.

The Code would apply to:

- Telehealth service providers that might be in the public, private or voluntary sectors;
- End users/patients;
- Commissioners;
- Manufacturers and suppliers of telehealth technologies.

The Code should promote collaboration and partnership working as the delivery of telehealth services must embrace a wide range of people and skills.

## Elements of the Code

The key elements of the Code would include:

- System and service design - including
  - Satisfaction of legal requirements and
  - Service accessibility
- Equipment management
- System and service sustainability - including
  - Risk management
  - Service failure
  - Service terminations / withdrawals
- Partnership working
  - The use of and management of data – including consents
- The nature of the support given to clinicians
- Making referrals
- Staff skills and training
- Service reviews
- Equal treatment
  - Environmental considerations – including equipment recycling.

Currently there are no codes that help to frame the operation of telehealth services. There are, however, some guidelines and regulations that relate to the technologies. Hence a key area of rapid technology and service development is unregulated.

The main deliverable of the project is the Code of Practice for Telehealth Services itself and detailed plans to facilitate its adoption and continued development. The launch of the Code is foreseen for April 2013 at Med-e-Tel (The International eHealth, Telemedicine and Health ICT Forum for Education, Networking and Business, [www.medetel.eu](http://www.medetel.eu)).

The main outcome will be adoption of the Code and its use within member states to underpin service frameworks that contribute to the well-being of EU citizens.

## Acknowledgements

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