



Dr K V Krishnan (India) - Empowering Healthcare with IT part 2

Posted by Company Mindteck 09/18/2011



This opening post gives an overview of the situation in India and how IT could be used to improve the situation. Part 2 will cover specific challenges and hospital initiatives.

IT Initiatives of some leading Indian Hospitals



Many Indian multispecialty hospitals have exhibited strong commitment to the use of innovative technology. Apollo Hospitals and Fortis Hospital have introduced a Universal Hospital Identification Number (UHIN), thereby providing access to the entire medical records of the patient. The medical data will be stored for life and any doctor in the hospital will be able to access the patient's medical history using the number. Apollo has been at the forefront of technology adoption for healthcare in India.

Another major telemedicine initiative of Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai is called Aravind Eye Care System (AECS). This real-time tele-connectivity decouples eye care service into three interconnected but different components: (1) patient examination (by the vision centre technician); (2) diagnosis (by the specialist in the base hospital); and (3) dispensation of medicines and/or spectacles (by the technician at the vision centre). The first vision centre (VC) was piloted in Southern Tamil Nadu through a wireless network based on WiFi 802.11b technology in 2004. In the last two years, AECS has switched to broadband connections as it

works out to be more economical compared to dedicated wireless networks. At present, there are 36 such vision centres in India managed by Aravind Eye Hospital.

Similar to AECS, Narayana Hrudayalaya of Bangalore has established 143 telemedicine centres, including 53 centres located in the African continent and have provided remote consultations to over 53,000 patients through these centres. Narayana Hrudayalaya also uses the Trans-Telephonic ECG (TT ECG) network to diagnose, provide opinion and recommend treatment plan on the ECG reports sent by physicians from across the country.

Other Potential Areas

Information Technology has also revolutionized the modern hospitals by making them paperless and filmless entities. IT has helped the hospitals in many ways by providing faster patient throughput, faster diagnosis, reduced manpower requirement and capturing patient history.

Several other modern areas such as Virtual Reality, Cyber surgery, Micro-robotic Surgery and 3D image modeling are bound to improve healthcare through IT.

Real time data provided by web-enabled technologies has strengthened monitoring and thereby enabling policy makers to make better decisions for public health delivery. It has also enhanced the information flow at various levels resulting in providing useful and timely inputs to various agencies involved in healthcare programme development and monitoring.

Challenges

The most common challenge for IT implementation in any segment is ambiguity in problem definition. The same scenario exists in the healthcare industry also. Many of the IT solutions in many hospitals have resulted in creating pockets of excellence which are ultimately rendered redundant by the slow and inefficient processes around them. Skepticism against IT is another major challenge in IT implementation in the healthcare sector. Role of training, hand holding and befriending the doctor is much more critical in healthcare industry than in any other industry.

Sustainability of IT in Indian Healthcare

Increasing awareness about IT among medical professionals, competition to adopt technology amidst private sector hospitals and government initiatives for "Healthcare for All" would be the key drivers for the sustainability of IT in Indian healthcare in the coming years. However, strong value systems, commitment, passion, innovations backed by effective delivery systems would be the ultimate prerequisites for sustainability.

By Dr K V Krishnan, Practice Head of Life Sciences, [Mindteck](#)

<http://www.idgconnect.com/blog-abstract/344/dr-k-v-krishnan-india-empowering-healthcare-it?region=asia>