

# THE USE OF ICTS IN HEALTH CARE DELIVERY AND CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE DIFFUSION: THE PSYCHOSOCIAL AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

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## **Objectives of the study**

The use and development of ICT, and the convergence thereof, in the research of health care delivery and Consumer Health Informatics, plays an important role in health care priority areas like the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Technology is proving itself to be potentially effective in solving health care issues regardless of geographical constraints. These initiatives are in line with New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) priority areas.

## **Methods**

The potential exists that e-Health affects the doctor patient relationship, the assurance of patient confidentiality and the dissemination of scientifically sound, responsible and accurate health information. This paper attempts to explore possible psychosocial and ethical challenges evoked by innovative uses of existing technologies. Further, an attempt is made to explore these challenges drawing from a) literature searches, b) planned research projects and c) lessons learned from completed research assignments. The synergies that exist between the two discipline, telemedicine and health informatics are also highlighted.

## **Results**

Patients' unfamiliarity with being treated remotely raises distrust and patient confidentiality could be at risk. In addition, inaccurate health information could ill inform people, creating confusion.

## **Conclusions**

Ideally telemedicine facilities should be embraced as a significant solution to health care challenges, however, incorporating a caring and reassuring manner, including the insurance of patient confidentiality are of the utmost importance. Lastly, Consumer Health Informatics research should be translated into policy, legislating the dissemination of health information.

Keywords: telemedicine, informatics, ethics, psychosocial