

‘Glocal’ e-Health – A Conceptual Policy Development Framework

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Introduction

There is no aspect of health or healthcare that has not been, is not being, or will not be impacted by e-health – i.e. the application of information and communication technologies in the health sector. The natural culmination of our combined localised and domestic efforts in e-health is creation of the entity of ‘Global e-Health’. Global e-health has the capability to transgress all geo-political, socio-cultural, and temporal barriers within and beyond the health sector, and has effectively created a ‘borderless world’.

Methods

A literature review (PubMed, Medline, and Google searches) failed to identify any model or framework for broad e-health policy development, but did identify documents describing ‘best practice’ in relation to policy development in general. Using these best practice documents, design of a framework to guide development of inter-jurisdictional e-health policy was undertaken.

Results

A framework has been developed that guides coordinated and iterative e-health policy development activities. These activities take place concurrently at the local, sub-national, national, regional, and global levels.

Discussion

Sound, inter-jurisdictional principles, and complementary e-health policy developed concurrently and collaboratively at *global* and *local* levels (i.e. ‘*glocal*’ e-health policy) is required to ensure the desired impact of e-health. However, while information and communications technology policy has been addressed, little attention has been paid to allied e-health policy in the glocal context. Thus although implementation and integration of e-health solutions is gaining momentum in developed and developing countries, concomitant glocal e-health policy development is lagging severely. Indeed, most e-health policy development remains domestically, or even locally, focused.

Conclusion

The spectrum and complexity of glocal e-health policy issues is not yet fully understood. But if e-health is to reach its logical goal – supporting health and healthcare globally - it is necessary to address the area of glocal e-health policy in an urgent, coordinated, and global manner. The proposed Glocal e-Health Policy Development Framework would facilitate this.