

E-HEALTH FOR ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA – A PRE-STUDY REPORT

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In South Africa HIV/AIDS management must be successful in extremely varying settings, from the densely populated urban environments to the geographically isolated rural communities. Valuable knowledge has been gained and crucial lessons have been learnt since the Government's ART-roll-out¹ started in 2003 that will contribute to fighting the global challenge of HIV/AIDS.

This presentation reports on the status quo of the current eHealth systems for ART-management in South Africa. Further, the study shows some of the findings of a pre-project on the needs regarding ICT-based services for ART- management in public, primary health care. The pre-study is a part of a joint project of developing an 'eHealth Toolkit', that is a Sustainable Primary Health Technologies for HIV/AIDS².

The pre-study will be conducted in Western Cape, South Africa, in September-October 2006. With the help of a literature review, an interactive approach will be chosen to identify available and in-use systems and approaches to address ART management with eHealth in low resource settings. A minimum of three ART-clinics will be selected for the pre-project, to cover the main environments of ARV treatment centers; rural, semi-rural and urban. Interviews and observations will be used to determine the health service standard, patient through-put and technology readiness. Data from interviews and observations will be used in a qualitative assessment and case study of a sustainable eHealth service implementation.

¹ ART is short for Antiretroviral Therapy

² The project is a joint collaboration between Cell-Life/University of Cape Town, Medical Research Council, South Africa and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Telemedicine and eHealth, Norway.