



Hospitals' E-Learning and Information Exchange Portal

Key factor collection

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Introduction:

The H.E.-L.P. project aims at the development of a learning and information platform covering the interface between hospitals / health organisations and patients / potential patients. The lack of information as well as communication between hospitals and the outside world on a local and regional basis has been identified as one major problem and challenge for the health systems, especially in front of an ageing society and the phenomenon of migration, which causes additional challenges in communication processes. The H.E.-L.P. information and learning platform will provide relevant and useful information and learning possibilities for patients and potential patients about health issues in general as well as concrete information and communication possibilities with the local hospital about health and organisational issues. The communication and interaction processes provided by hospitals should furthermore be supported by modern web 2.0 based functions and approaches.

In a first step the project partnership of the H.E.-L.P. project consisting of organisations from AT, DE, FI, IT, GR, SE and TR started to investigate the needs of patients / potential patients as well as hospital staff in terms of learning content and communication possibilities. This European Survey on the two main target groups (accompanied by an in depth analysis of existing web based information offers from hospitals (hospital websites)) has been implemented in all partner countries from 03/2011 to 06/2011. The data, information and recommendations received have been processed and channelled into a European Survey report available on the project website www.he-lp.eu for download.

Consequently the project partners started an in depth discussion about the results of the survey, the feedback received which lead into a collection of key factors both on content as well as on didactical / technical level that form the basis of the following phase of platform development in a master version. On the following pages the results of the performed key factor collection will be presented in brief. More detailed information about the single factors, its background and characteristics can be found in the European Survey report of the H.E.-L.P. project.

2. Content Key factors for the H.E.-L.P. information and learning platform

2.1. Healthy lifestyle issues

In both survey target groups the topic of healthy lifestyle was mentioned in first place to be interesting and important. Learning about issues around healthy lifestyle including physical activities, nutrition, stress, addiction topics, depression etc. are clearly important to be provided on a learning platform of hospitals. During the discussion of this first key factor the partnership decided to divide the general approach of healthy lifestyle into two separate sections:

- a) *Physical wellbeing*
- b) *Mental wellbeing*

This division allows a better concentration of issues and does equally favour both levels, otherwise there would have been the danger, that mental wellbeing is not so well presented and is too much covered by issues of physical wellbeing. Nevertheless the learning platform should seek to show overlapping between both levels and should also demonstrate the influence one level has on the other. Within the mental wellbeing section issues around stress, burn out syndrome and depression should be shown as learning content in detail since these diseases show a dramatic increase during the last years and are seen to become the most crucial public health influence factor in the next decades.

2.2. Diagnosis methods offered:

Both patients and hospital staff have shown a clear preference for being acquainted with the main diagnosis methods offered in a particular hospital. Especially patients and potential patients are very often sent to hospital from a family doctor with the need of a special diagnosis procedure and are lacking concrete information about what will happen there, what are the risks attached to diagnosis methods, which preparation is necessary for some methods (e.g. endoscopic methods) etc. The analysis of existing hospital websites show that hardly any hospitals are providing this concrete information and learning content and if so, content is presented in a quite scientific way, didactical formats are not well respected and especially for migrants the language of learning content is not appropriate. On this basis the partnership decided that diagnosis methods offered by a hospital are one content priority and content key factor for the H.E.-L.P. learning and information platform.

2.3. Medical treatment methods offered

In addition to the methods offered for the diagnosis of diseases the survey clearly shows the need for learning about the main medical treatment methods offered. Patients and potential patients want to be informed about single methods in detail, also it is mentioned that in general the internet is not a very serious source of information about treatment methods and information and learning content offered by a local hospital would receive much more trust by patients and potential patients. The partnership therefore decided that a detailed presentation of the main medical treatment methods offered in a hospital and/or department of a hospital shall be another content key factor for the H.E.-L.P. learning platform. In addition to the presentation of the main medical treatment methods offered in a hospital the partnership also decided that especially the particular excellence of a hospital in special treatment methods (e.g. minimal invasive laparoscopy etc.) shall be mentioned and supported by available quality data (e.g. number of cases, success rates, failure rate etc.). This should also have the effect to motivate the hospital staff for further excellence and quality. An important factor attached to the medical treatment methods mentioned especially by the patients and potential patients was that they want to know and be informed about personal risks attached to single methods as well as the time needed for single treatments (e.g. anaesthesia risks, time for surgical interventions etc.). Connected with the learning need around medical treatments was also the need for getting to know about staff involved and familiarisation with the treatment place which will have influence on methodological and didactical level. This is why these topics will be discussed as separate didactical key factor further below.



2.4. Care and rehabilitation methods offered:

The next clearly identifiable information and learning section is the care and rehabilitation field. Especially the patients and potential patients want to be informed about what is happening with them after the immediate medical treatment and who is going to take care of them after treatment. Also rehabilitation issues connected with time needed and special

offers from the single hospital should be presented. The partnership therefore decided to include a learning section on the H.E.-L.P. information and learning platform for the topic of care and rehabilitation. Similar to the medical treatment the survey showed the need for familiarisation with staff and resources in the care environment of a hospital which has also didactical impact, which will be presented and discussed further below. The learning section about the care and rehabilitation issues should furthermore also contain information on how patients can support the care process and how compliance of patients can be increased.



2.5. General information about the hospital:

The final key factor on content level which is clearly deductable from the results of the European survey performed is the need for practical and general information about the particular hospital. Patients and potential patients want to know about how they can reach the hospital, opening hours, ambulances offered, doctors on duty, emergency services etc. Furthermore patients would like to have important documents like registration documents, information sheets about different treatments and diagnosis methods, food and menu plans etc. in downloadable format on such an information platform. They want to be familiarised with staff working in different departments and places together with a map of the hospital or even a virtual tour through the hospital / department. The general information section should also contain information about special expertise of different staff and excellence of the hospital / department. The quality policy of the hospital together with a presentation of the patients' rights should also be made available for download or learning in the general information section of the platform.



3. Didactical Key factors for the H.E.-L.P. information and learning platform:

Besides the discussion of content relevant issues and deductions from the European survey the H.E.-L.P. partnership identified the following key factors to regard for the methodological and didactical setup of the learning and information platform.

3.1. Communication and online interaction

Despite the fact that communication between hospitals / staff and the outside world (patients and potential patients) is one of the most important issues according to the project proposal, this function was also clearly mentioned and requested by both target groups in the European survey. The H.E.-L.P. platform should allow either synchronous or asynchronous e-communication between both parties concerning medical and health questions and/or organisational issues around visits to hospitals. A section for interaction between hospitals and patients will therefore be foreseen on the platform however there are strong concerns related to three major issues that need to be considered:

- a) Privacy of data: Health issues are sensitive issues and require privacy and data protection for all information dealt with in such a system. As different countries (partner countries) do have different requirements and legal possibilities for this aspect it will be difficult to technically foresee a system which is possible and legally applicable in all partner countries. It shall therefore be searched for a possibility to allow communication, however without personal data behind and not interfering with any data protection issues relevant in the single partner countries. Communication should be possible but mainly anonymous and without data protection and privacy issues concerned. The responsible partner for the development of the master version of the H.E.-L.P. platform shall try to suggest possible solutions during the development process.
- b) Forensic issues: In many countries distance diagnosis and recommendations given on diseases and /or symptoms do carry the risk for forensic problems. This results in the fact that basically it will not be possible to answer questions like “which disease is it, when I have pain there and there, or I have this symptoms “ etc. Online communication between hospitals and patients must be limited to general recommendations or to the decision if a visit to the hospital is indicated. Nevertheless a very basic and easy communication possibility with the hospital staff shall be provided on the platform since the barrier to speak to the hospital prior to really visit it, is still very high.
- c) Time: The possibility to communicate with staff of the hospital would require the time of both parties – patients and hospital staff. As what concerns the hospital staff

this time for answering communication requests, being available online for any questions patients may have will be limited and the European Survey showed big concerns from hospital staff that this may not be possible. Nevertheless the partnership decided as for a test and pilot phase time should not be a reason for limiting the communication possibilities between patients and hospitals. Within the test and pilot phase the accompanying evaluation shall pay particular attention to the time factor to allow a good and solid evaluation to build adaptation decisions on them.

3.2. Photos and videos for learning and familiarisation

Patients and potential patients showed the clear wish for getting to know staff and resources prior to the visit to a hospital. This result is totally in line with the assumptions and hypotheses made before the development of the project and has therefore particular importance for the development of the information and learning platform. Release of fears and concerns before patients visit the hospital has a crucial positive effect on results, compliance and outcomes of diagnosis and treatment methods. Therefore it was decided by the project partnership to didactically support this familiarisation process on the H.E.-L.P. platform. Introduction videos about the hospital and/or department together with videos about single treatment methods, familiarisation with staff and resources, supported by pictures and photos will play an important role on the information platform.

3.3. Downloadable information

The information and learning platform will also contain a section with downloadable information which has the two main functions:

- a) Further information on different diseases, treatment methods, diagnosis methods etc. For many different diseases hospitals hold special information sheets and briefings which can further explain diseases, treatment methods etc. and should support staff with their work of informing patients. These information sheets and briefings will be made available online for download on the H.E.-L.P. information platform
- b) Practical information for preparation: in many cases patients need to fill forms for their hospital visit (e.g. registration forms, allergies, dietary wishes, prior diseases etc.) filling these forms can very often also be made from home to save time and efforts in the hospitals. A selection of practically relevant documents will be made available also for download on the information and learning platform.

3.4. Self testing

The partnership had some huge discussions about the value and risks attached to offer self tests on the H.E.-L.P. platform. However it was decided to offer a limited selection of available and scientifically valid self tests, merely in form of e.g. risk calculators for cardiovascular happenings within the next 5 years (issued e.g. by the American Heart Association), tests about alcohol abuse and depression. The section provided with self tests will have clear reminders about the limits and risks attached to self testing and calculation of risks, however these tests (if scientifically valid) have an important function in the public health sector and can help to make risks transparent and support preventive medicine approaches.

3.5. Limited link section

The H.E.-L.P. platform will contain a section with relevant links and in addition to this links to external sources will also be embedded in single learning and content sections. However as a relevant key factor for the development of the platform it was agreed by all partners, that links to external sources shall be strictly limited, the H.E.-L.P. platform should not be just a link collection to external sources in relation to the health topics presented there. A learning and information platform offered by a local hospital nearby has the big advantage to receive high trust by patients who are seeing health information in the internet very critically. If this platform would be nothing else than a portal to external sources in the internet, this basic trust would be destroyed. Therefore concerning links to external web sources presented the partnership agreed on two principles:

- a) A limited number of links and only where it is really necessary (external videos, pictures etc.)
- b) Only serious and quality sources shall be linked (e.g. medical associations, societies etc.) but no links to semi-professional sources with no or limited quality control (e.g. Wikipedia, Netdoctors etc.)