

A CHALLENGE TO e-Health: NEED OF ETHICAL GUIDELINES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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e-Health: Electronic communication in Health services



APPLICATION OF E-Health:

Interactive health communication in various fields

- Tele- Radiology
- Tele- Pathology
- Tele- Dermatology
- Tele- Cardiology
- Tele- Psychiatry
- And many more fields

Tele-radiology



Tele-Pathology



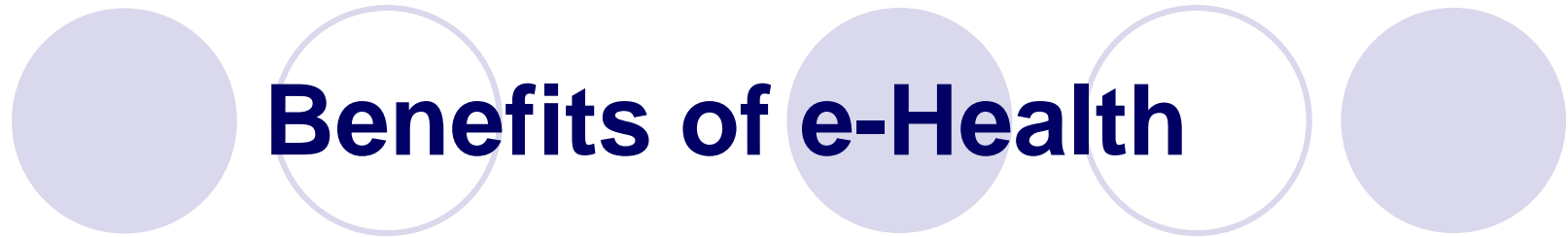
E-Health Services:





Users of E-Health services:

- Health care providers
- Patients and their families
- Researchers
- Educators
- Insurers
- Other stake-holders



Benefits of e-Health

- Quickness
- Removes geographic limitations
- Usually cost-effective
- New source of knowledge-sharing

Beauchamp and Childress's Ethical Principles

- Autonomy:
- Beneficence:
- Nonmaleficence:
- Justice:



Potential disadvantages/Ethical risks of e-Health

- Risks of fraudulent practices due to absence of licensure and rules governing e-health
- Issues of jurisdiction
- Responsibilities of providers (e.g. physicians)
- Rights and responsibilities of users (e.g. patients and research subjects)

Potential disadvantages/Ethical risks of e-Health

- Privacy and confidentiality of patients and research subjects
- Security and confidentiality of data
- Conflict of interest
- Risks of other malpractices

Potential disadvantages/Ethical risks of e-Health

- With availability of e-health services in remote, rural and unprivileged areas there is potential of mushrooming and unregulated growth of e-health services in those particular areas.
- Consequently there is imminent risk of shifting of technical and medical personnel from under-served regions to privileged areas.
- Result: Widening the gap of inequities

New responsibilities and challenges: Application of Ethical Principles

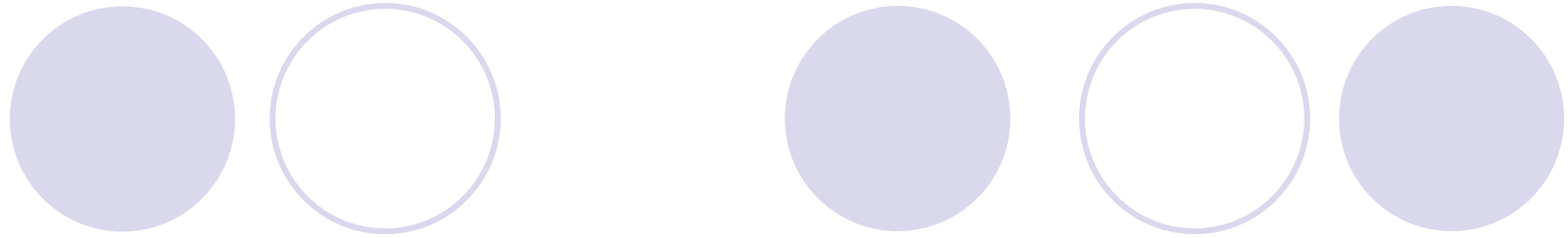
- ❑ New responsibilities for clinicians
- Safeguard potential vulnerability of patients' records and other confidential information
- Assure increasingly needed "informed consent"
- Fill the geographic gap in "Physician Patient Relationship" in e-health practices
- Avoid inherent possibility of fraud and abuse

What is needed to resolve these problems?

- Retaining the benefits achieved by e-health and avoiding the potential risks and harms there is need of ethical guidelines
- Such guidelines and codes have been formulated in many developed countries
- But in developing these are either in infancy or altogether absent

To harmoniously expand the discipline of e-Health and respecting ethical codes:

- We need ethical guidelines/codes commensurate with our social and cultural values formulated at national level
- Need of indigenous guidelines due to the fact that:
 - ✓ Healer (physician) is usually in developed country
 - ✓ To-be-healed (patient) is usually in the developing country



This Challenge

Needs to be addressed

ETHICAL GUIDELIENS

Thanks for Patient Listening

