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A snapshot of eHealth practices across Europe

on 7 June 2013 |

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Healthcare

Where telemedicine initiatives are concerned, from electronic medical records to virtual interactions between patients and doctors, all European countries aren't quite at the same stage.

Germany

After a few false starts, eHealth cards ([eGK](#)) were implemented in Germany in 2011. The cards store basic information (tracking reimbursements from state and private healthcare systems, a brief medical history, etc), but can be extended – with the patients' consent – to other services such as e-prescriptions, centralised access by both patients and healthcare professionals to diagnostics, test results and treatment.

Belgium

Belgian patients may obtain, upon request, a *Dossier Medical Global* ([DMG](#)) or electronic medical record managed by their GP. One of the advantages of this system is that it gives patients reductions on some consultation fees. Users are charged an annual handling fee (under €30) but which is then fully reimbursed by their private health insurance.

Spain

Spain is one of Europe's trailblazers for implementing pilot eHealth programmes, particularly where sharing electronic medical records is

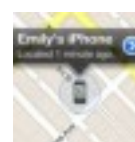
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On 22 November 2013, Econocom finalised the acquisition of the entire share capital of Osiatis, a major infrastructure service provider and related applications specialist. This transaction has resulted in the creation of a major new digital service company, with over **8,000 employees** in **20 countries** and total revenue of around **€2 billion**.

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concerned. Since they were first introduced in 2009, Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) have been managed and subsidised by each regional council. In Andalusia, the Diraya digital programme's result speak for themselves: 95% of the population covered, 300 million appointments made via SMS, Internet or over the phone, and 8 million e-prescriptions made a month. The country plans to improve coordination of these regional eHealth initiatives and ensure nationwide interoperability.

France

In France, the ASIP Santé (Agency for Shared Healthcare IT Systems) is the body in charge of coordinating the deployment of connected health in France. Founded in 2009, ASIP Santé is in charge of EMRs, but is struggling to keep up with doctors' and patients' demands (only 340,000 EMRs have been created in France since the system was launched in 2011). The Ministry of Health recently decided to focus on using EMRs to monitor elderly patients and sufferers of chronic diseases.

United Kingdom

A few years ago, the NHS (National Health Service) launched a programme for centralising connected health in the UK called "Connecting for Health". One of the first initiatives arising from this project was the creation of Summary Care Records (SCRs), the aim of which was to provide healthcare staff treating patients in an emergency with faster access to key clinical information. The NHS also set up HealthSpace, an online service whereby healthcare professionals could share and access medical data. The portal was however not as popular as expected and was closed down by the Department of Health in early 2013.

Europe

Launched in 2012 by the European Union, epSOS is a pilot eHealth project for exchanging healthcare data and testing the interoperability of healthcare systems. The programme covers 12 countries, whereby each European citizen may – provided they give their consent – share their medical records with healthcare professionals across Europe. The electronic record contains essential medical information such as the patient's medical history and any ongoing treatment.

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What sort of eHealth applications are available to European patients?

An Accenture survey called ‘‘Connected Health: the Drive to Integrated Healthcare Delivery’’ compared eHealth technologies in eight countries, with a particular focus on four of them.

Use of patient information and communication technologies

Accenture survey question: Please identify which of the following patient-related technologies are available to your patients:

	England	Survey average	Australia	Canada	France	Germany
Patients can electronically access their medical information	6.7%	8.2%	2.4%	2.8%	5.2%	3.2%
Patients can electronically book/change/cancel appointments	33.3%	20.7%	2.6%	4.0%	7.6%	22.8%
Patients receive electronic reminders when it is time for preventative or follow up care	17.1%	18.9%	19.8%	6.4%	8.0%	16.9%
Patients can see health-related information during the consultation	35.9%	29.2%	41.5%	18.4%	28.3%	24.8%
Patients can electronically request prescription refills	33.3%	20.6%	4.6%	7.2%	12.0%	27.8%
Patients can communicate with me electronically, for example, through secure email or video conferencing	16.7%	27.4%	20.6%	19.2%	29.5%	47.4%
Patients can use tele-monitoring devices to monitor and record their own health indicators and remotely inform me of their conditions	8.2%	7.5%	3.6%	4.4%	6.4%	6.7%
Patients can electronically access health information/education to help them manage their own conditions	25.9%	19.3%	17.0%	14.2%	14.5%	4.4%

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