



Virtual health care center in Georgia

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Abstract

Introduction: Application of telemedicine systems to cover distant geographical areas has increased recently. However, the potential usefulness of similar systems for creation of national networks does not seem to be widely appreciated.

Methods: The article describes the “Virtual Health Care Knowledge Center in Georgia” project. It aimed set up of an online integrated web-based platform to provide remote medical consultations and eLearning cycles. The project “Virtual Health Care Knowledge Center in Georgia” was the NATO Networking Infrastructure Grant dedicated for development of telemedicine in non-NATO countries.

Results: The project implemented a pilot to organize the creation of national eHealth network in Georgia and to promote the use of innovative telemedicine and eLearning services in the Georgian healthcare system. At June 2007 it was continued under the NATO Networking Infrastructure Grant “ePathology – Virtual Pathology Center in Georgia as the Continuation of Virtual Health Care Center”.

Conclusions: By comparison with the usual health services telemedicine introduces added value and a positive impact at social, economic and cultural levels. Therefore, telemedicine is beginning to have an important impact on many aspects of healthcare in non-NATO countries. When implemented well telemedicine may allow these countries leapfrog over their developed neighbours in successful healthcare delivery.

Keywords: Telepathology, ePathology, Telemedicine, Image, Telemicroscope, Remote diagnosis, Teleconsultation, Second opinion, Virtual microscopy, Distance education, eLearning.