

Promoting cost effective healthcare services through the use of mHealth apps

Mobile health or mHealth is the use of mobile information and communications technology, most commonly mobile phones, to improve health. There are now over 6 billion mobile phone subscriptions globally, allowing health care services and practitioners to penetrate even the most remote rural areas of developing countries.

mHealth has the potential to make an impact at two levels: Firstly, by improving client-centred care through health education, patient adherence and patient monitoring and strengthening health systems through point of care support for health workers, training and education for health workers in supply chain management, emergency medical response and health information systems. Secondly; strengthening health systems and improving their outcomes within a country by improving efficiency, communication, costs, and quality of healthcare services, through the leveraging of the billions already invested in the mobile and wireless markets.

In the past few years the global community has taken tremendous steps towards realizing the potential of mobile health to make much needed health information services available to people beyond the reach of the formal system. This Innovation of the industry through the use of already existent infrastructure has allowed us to extend access of information to workers and health facilities that already provide services to the four billion people who live at the base of economic pyramid, thus creating efficiency and effectiveness and countering preventable deaths in these regions

As the use of smartphones and tablets have been increasingly becoming the mobile devices of first choice for users in this era, digitising and linking records for consumer communication with healthcare professionals is becoming more common and a convenient means of making contact and accelerating change. How great would it be if you could book an appointment by using an app on your smartphone? Imagine using your mobile device to thoroughly monitor your wellness in real- time. Mobile healthcare services are able to provide apps for remote monitoring, patient data, electronic records, e-prescriptions, and also include fitness and wellness apps.

mHealth allows for healthcare professionals to make more informed decisions, by providing the most relevant health care information on treatments as well as comprehensive patient records enabling evidence based care and facilitates pro-active medical treatments create transparency and accountability while allowing for collaboration between Care Providers, Patients and the Patient Support Team. This new phenomenon called the “Circle of Care” creates an enabling

environment and improves efficiency and effectiveness enabling better access to care and better patient outcomes through reduction in re-admission rates or simple access to timely care and treatment information.

Patients can also now take control of their own health with the added ability to access medical records and receive reminders about scheduled medication. As patients shift towards mHealth solutions, this could dramatically decrease the number of people in Doctor's waiting rooms, thereby creating massive time savings for healthcare professionals. There are thousands of mHealth apps which are offered for both the consumer and healthcare provider, as well as applications that have different functionalities. Women's healthcare apps are among some of the most popular, particularly apps concerning pregnancy.

In this fast paced technological industry where technology changes almost instantaneously, mobile development is being utilized by many companies all over the world. Here in Trinidad at CARIRI's Centre for Enterprise Development (CED), where the mCentre is housed; we encourage, facilitate and help promote this creativity. Currently, the App Club has over 150 members, all of whom share the same passion for this kind of creative development. mCentre helps bridge the gap between developers and non-developers, those with the ideas and those with technical knowledge. The mCentre brings to you the Living Lab; it's your first stop on the way to making your mobile app a success.

Centre for Enterprise Development

The Centre for Enterprise Development (CED) is a flagship development of CARIRI which is aimed at facilitating Research, Development and Innovation. The Tekmania arm of CED accommodates Information and Communication Technology (ICT) project initiatives being undertaken by CARIRI that are geared towards enhancing the operational efficiencies of SMEs.

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