

The Role of Technology in the Production, Consumption and Use of Health Information: Implications for Policy and Practice

ACTION for Health- Overview Poster

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ACTION for Health

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\$1.768 billion federal dollars have been invested in development of the Canadian Health Information Highway since 1997.

- What benefits have been realized?
- What challenges are encountered?

Canadians value our health system, and want to ensure that investment in the system delivers quality care while remaining consistent with the values of equity, collective and individual responsibility, efficiency and effectiveness.



Our project explores the interaction of people with technology as diverse Canadians turn to technology to produce, consume and use health information. We conduct multi-method case studies in three areas:

1. issues arising for professional and lay users as they consume internet based health information;
2. issues arising as new information technologies such as electronic patient records are introduced into health sector work; and
3. ethical and legal issues that arise with increased use of information technology in the health sector.

We begin by exploring stated objectives for computerization of the health sector.

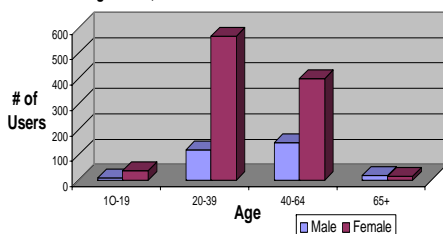
- ▶ That the use of information systems in health care will improve care and lower costs;
- ▶ That internet based delivery of health information will lead to patient empowerment and health improvements;
- ▶ That computerized information systems such as automated drug dispensing machines will improve patient safety and reduce costs.

Major Project Goals

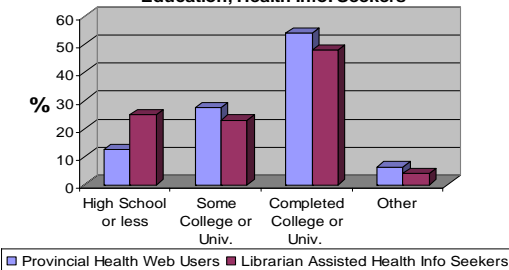
- Present a more realistic view of the challenges related to use of information technologies in the health sector;
- Highlight the role of pre-purchase and pre-implementation research in realizing health policy goals;
- Bring emergent ethical and legal issues to the attention of policy makers;
- Assist our partners in improving technology-related outcomes in the health sector.

Who Looks On-Line for Health Information?

Age & Sex, Provincial Health Information Web Site Users



Education, Health Info. Seekers



Do They Find What They Want On-line?

47.7% of librarian assisted health information seekers looked on-line for health information prior to seeking help from a librarian.

Of those who sought on-line health information prior to seeking help from a librarian,

- 80.9% indicated they knew where to find helpful information on the internet;
- 85.7% agreed they knew how to find helpful information on the internet,
- 71.4% indicated they knew how to tell high quality resources from low quality resources on the internet.

What Issues Arise with Use of Information Technology in Health Sector Workplaces?

- ▶ Information technology purchasing decisions in the health sector are frequently based on vendor claims rather than evidence of cost savings, efficiency improvements and improvements in health outcomes. As systems are implemented, gaps between vendor claims and realities emerge.
- ▶ The introduction of new information technology into health sector workplaces alters local work practices, which can inadvertently introduce potential sources for error.
- ▶ Government reporting requirements for health information are often introduced long after commercial information systems have been purchased and implemented. This causes tension between health authorities who are supporting the purchase of hospital and regional information systems, vendors and provincial governments.

Our Team consists of 19 co-investigators and 20 organizations ranging from community groups to government agencies.
Co-investigators come from the Universities of Victoria, British Columbia, Western Ontario, Toronto, Quebec, Simon Fraser, Carleton, McMaster, York, Dalhousie and Memorial. Foreign team members come from Austria, Australia, the UK and the Netherlands.

Partners: AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador, BC Cancer Agency, Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange, Canadian Health Network, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Community Access Program, Industry Canada, Grey Bruce Huron Perth District Health Council, MacMorran Community Centre (Newfoundland), Mid-Main Community Health Centre (B.C.), National Research Council of Canada, Planned Parenthood (Newfoundland and Labrador), Smart Choices Society of British Columbia, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Vancouver Public Library, Victoria Hospice Society, Ministry of Health Services, Prevention and Wellness Planning Division (British Columbia), Coventry & Warwickshire GP Research Consortium (UK), Hanusch Krankenhaus Hospital (Austria), Lifeline Brisbane (Australia), Northern Primary Care Research Network (UK).