

THE TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

The technical management of ICT/Telemedicine Services is one Hospital Manager's crucial problem.

The Biomedical Technologies Market has clearly shown that technical support to the user is one of the most critical issues that contribute to guarantee the quality of service in High-Tech applications. Therefore the ICT/Telemedicine Services, which belong to the high innovation area as well, require adequate competencies and human resources in order to provide users with a proper technical support.

All these technologies require on the one hand a specialist who normally works remotely (II level support) and on the other hand an ordinary management activity (I level technical support) in order to avoid that medical staff stop their work in the operative environment.

This paper reports the experience in the Monaldi Hospital in Naples and describes different management solutions.

KEYWORDS

e-Health, Technical Management, Training On The Job, Health Information System

1. INTRODUCTION

The technical management of ICT/Telemedicine Services is one of the General Manager's crucial problems (Pepino, 2001; Pepino 2002; Pepino 2004; Wager, 2005).

The Biomedical Technologies Market has clearly shown that the technical support is one of the most critical issues that contribute to guarantee the quality of service in High-Tech applications. The ICT/Telemedicine Services, which belong to the high innovation area as well, require adequate competencies and human resources in order to provide users with a proper technical support.

In the South of Italy (and in some cases in the North too) it must be underlined that often the technical partners within hospitals are not adequately skilled in the specific field and they are not able to provide effective solutions; moreover, the administrative constraints in Public Hospitals, make very problematic the recruitment of technical personnel. These problems caused, as an immediate effect, a dramatic loss of technological know-how in Public Hospitals.

Therefore all the hospitals who had believed in the innovation, had the immediate feeling of not being able to guarantee the proper technical management both of hardware/software and organizational systems. Therefore in the last few years the "outsourcing" has raised as an alternative solution capable to provide effective and immediate answers to the management of complex ICT systems.

Outsourcing means that one private company on behalf of a Public Hospital takes the full responsibility of the whole ICT system installed in the hospital in order to become a technical shield between the hospital and all the technology providers. This approach seems to be the panacea but unfortunately in some cases lead to problems and high costs.

This paper reports the experience in the Monaldi Hospital in Naples and aims to suggest a trade-off among different management solutions.