

Status of eHealth in the WHO European Region

Fact sheet

March 2016

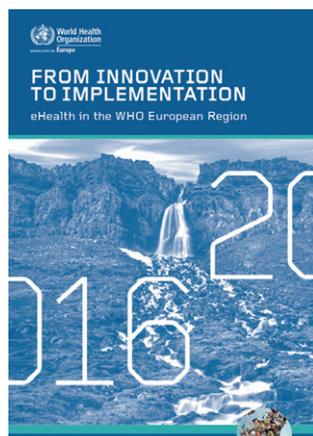
eHealth

eHealth is defined as the use of electronic means to deliver information, resources and services related to health. It covers many domains, including electronic health records, mobile health and health analytics, among others. eHealth can put information in the right place at the right time, providing more services to a wider population and in a personalized manner.

eHealth in the European Region

eHealth can reduce health inequalities and help to modernize national health information systems and services. It has become a key asset for accessing health information and services, as well as improving how health information is gathered, managed and used. The prevalence of eHealth is growing in Europe and many programmes are maturing into established national services, indicating Member States' commitment to eHealth. A new WHO report on eHealth in the WHO European Region specifies that improvements in sustainable funding models, legislation, evaluations and education in eHealth will further support this progress.

KEY INFORMATION FROM THE REPORT



eHealth basics

The majority of Member States have demonstrated their commitment to eHealth: 70% have a national eHealth policy or strategy. Such strategies for eHealth – involving ethical frameworks, funding strategies and education on eHealth – ensure its sustainable growth and maturity.

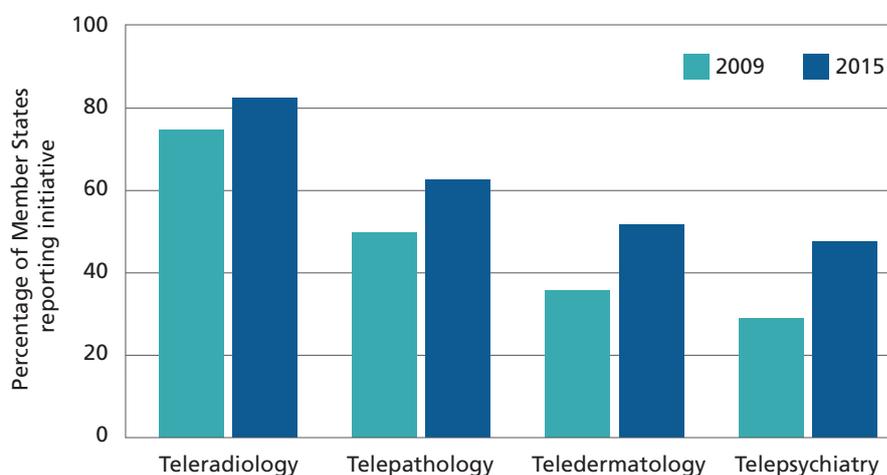
Electronic health records (EHRs)

Among Member States in the European Region, 59% have a national EHR system, and 69% of those have legislation on its use. These are key elements of national eHealth strategies, which allow access to complete and timely information at the point of care.

Telehealth

National policies or strategies address telehealth in 62% of Member States – an increase of over 30% since 2009. In countries where telehealth is more mature, current programmes are being expanded and new services added, such as health education and self-monitoring for patients (see Fig. 1 for more information).

Fig. 1. Trends in Member States with telehealth services, 2009 and 2015



Mobile health (mHealth)

Government-sponsored mHealth programmes are in place in 49% of Member States, but only 7% have carried out evaluations of these programmes. As part of a strategic approach to mHealth, evaluations of services can explore benefits for patients and track progress in reaching national health-related goals (see Table 1 for more information).

eLearning

eLearning is used for students of health sciences by 66% of Member States and for training of health professionals by 71%, providing users with increased access to educational programmes and experts. Using eLearning as part of a national health strategy can improve the skills and knowledge of health workers.

Social media

Although social media in health is widely used in the European Region, only 14% of Member States have a national policy or strategy on its use in health professions. This means that only a small percentage of Member States use it strategically to help accomplish health objectives. The use of social media in health encourages public education and involvement in health, but students and professionals need training on its use.

Health analytics and big data

Only 13% of Member States have a national policy or strategy regulating the use of big data in the health sector and 9% on the use of big data by private companies. Public data and health data analytics improve national, regional and global health information, such as evidence for decision- and policy-making, but qualified employees are needed in this area.

Legal frameworks

National legislation to protect the privacy of health-related data in electronic format is in place in 80% of Member States – an increase of nearly 30% since 2009. Legal frameworks help establish the effective use of eHealth and build patient trust in the services: they are a key factor in the successful implementation of eHealth.

Table 1. Trends in Member States with mHealth services, 2009 and 2015

	2009	2015
Health call centres/helplines	64%	70%
Emergency toll-free telephone services	64%	76%
Treatment adherence	40%	61%
Appointment reminders	53%	74%
Awareness-raising	28%	61%
Mobile telemedicine or telehealth	64%	74%
Emergency response and management	56%	63%
Health surveys	21%	59%
Surveillance	17%	41%
Patient monitoring	47%	70%
Access to information and tools	36%	70%
Access to CDSSs	25%	52%
Access to electronic patient information	47%	72%

This information is taken from the 2016 report *From innovation to implementation – eHealth in the WHO European Region*.

To download the report and for more information, please visit

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Health-systems/e-health/from-innovation-to-implementation-ehealth-in-the-who-european-region-2016> or <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Health-systems/e-health>

