

Investigation of the Potential for Connected Health Technologies amongst Public Health Nurses



Executive Summary

This piece of research is an ethnographic study of the Public Health Nursing ecosystem. It aims to create an understanding of this role and the challenges public health nurses (PHNs) face. It also aims to identify potential opportunities for connected health solutions to support PHNs in the delivery of care to their patient cohorts.

In terms of their role, PHNs view themselves as specialist generalists that have to be many types of healthcare givers in order to cater for the variety of patient needs in the community. They have a very particular culture of care that embodies their philosophy of 'being there' for their patients.

A central finding of this study highlights that due to the growing complexity and sheer number of health needs in the community that the PHN has to manage, the time they are spending on clerical tasks is increasing ad-nauseam. In this context, the main challenge expressed by PHNs is the time-burden generated by these tasks and that there is a salient need to forge a less labour intensive office-based environment. This would result in PHNs having more time to dedicate to the most important aspect of their roles, providing effective care to the community.

Connected Health Opportunities for Industry

In terms of industry opportunities, there are two core areas of potential for Connected Health development:

1. There is an immediate need for a digital child register and birth notification system in the area of Child Health – the current system is entirely paper-based and Excel formatted registers are very slowly being introduced. In the meantime, PHNs have created their individual paper registers which have no (adhered to) standardised form.
2. On a larger scale, there is also an immediate need for the development of a digital referral system for Primary Care centres – the current system relies completely on the fax machine; if there is no toner in the fax machine, community care referrals, and ultimately the delivery of community care, stops.

There was a strong agreement amongst PHNs that if either solution was developed, this technology could significantly increase the available time for PHNs to deliver more effective community care.

Companies with a commercial interest in these connected health opportunities or who are intertested in collaborating with ARCH should contact the Project Co-ordinator on info@arch.ie or call 01 7165400.

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Collaborators

Vu2Vu and ADA Security

Research Theme

Care

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31/03/2015

Project Deliverable*

Report outlining the Potential for Connected Health Solutions in the Role for the Public Health Nurse

**ARCH Industry Members have full access to this report*



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