European guidelines for cross border exchange of patients' health data considered as a leading reference to set up international standards

7 April 2019

On the occasion of its final conference organised in Brussels on the 19th March, the CEN 'International Patient Summary' project presented the results of its works focused on turning the current European guidelines on Patient Summary adopted by the eHealth Network into European standards, in the context of the creation of International standards for Patient Summary, which would apply worldwide.

The CEN 'International Patient Summary' project[1] lasted two years and aimed to support the European participation in the global standardization process aiming at setting implementable standards for the exchange of an International Patient Summary. The aim of the initiative was to enable the use of the Patient Summary not only in cross-border care, but also in national and local exchanges, to allow patients and doctors to have access to the patients' health data wherever the treatment takes place. The focus of the work was to see how to develop European standards on Patient Summaries, based on the Guidelines adopted by the eHealth Network so far, which fit into this broader international initiative. The proposed European standards which result from this two years work will be discussed on the eHealth Network in June 2019 to be applied in the context of eHDSI.

The eHealth Network[2] is the governance body set up under Directive 2011/24/EU on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare which connects national authorities responsible for eHealth. In the eHealth Network, EU countries can give direction to eHealth developments in Europe by playing an important role in strategic e-Health related decision-making on interoperability and standardisation.

The work conducted by the CEN 'International Patient Summary' project has been done in collaboration with the Joint Action "eHAction", which aim is to support the eHealth Network in defining eHealth developments in Europe by addressing the technical aspects of eHealth.

The Patient Summaries provide background information on important health-related aspects such as allergies, current medication, previous illness, surgeries, etc., making it digitally accessible in case of a medical (emergency) visit in another country. It is an abstract of a larger collection of health data called the European Health Record. The Patient Summary is progressively deployed across the European countries.

The CEN 'International Patient Summary' project is led by CEN/TC 251[3], which is a standards development organization delivering health informatics standards for Europe.

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[1] http://www.ehealth-standards.eu/en/projects/
[2] https://ec.europa.eu/health/ehealth/cooperation_en
[3] http://www.ehealth-standards.eu/