



COLABOR@- Teledermatology. Distant consultation with a specialist

This is a telematics applications set up by the Hospital del Mar in collaboration with Telefonica allowing family doctors to refer priority cases to a specialist in dermatology avoiding delays. The project consists in sending photographs of the affected area through a platform called Colabor@ which allows the dermatologist to access the images and the patient's medical record and decide if and how soon a patient should visit the specialist.

The project included 421 patients over the course of one year (September 2010 to September 2011). This number of patients represents around 15% of the total number of patients referred to a dermatologist in the two outpatient centres included in the study during this period of time.

The project's objectives were:

- Prioritizing referrals to dermatology services of patients with a relevant pathology.
- Reducing waiting times to visit a dermatologist.
- Reducing the number of consultations for patients who have been diagnosed and are under a definite treatment.
- Increasing the level of user satisfaction.
- Relieving the volume of patients visiting a dermatologist at an outpatients'.
- Increasing diagnosis skills for dermatological pathologies by family doctors.
- Assess the usefulness of clinical imaging regarding dermatology to screen suspicious lesions.

Conclusions of the project:

- Asynchronous dermatology in the proposed model shows an acceptable diagnosis precision and equivalent to previous studies, allowing adequate screening and referral for dermatological relevant pathologies.
- Dermatoscopy seems to improve the diagnosis and the decision capacity of teledermatologists without having a statistical relevance. Broader studies would be needed to confirm this trend.
- 29% of referrals to a dermatologist from primary healthcare do not require on-site consultation and could be managed using teledermatology, thus reducing waiting lists for dermatology services.
- Users show satisfaction with the teledermatology programme; however, there is a high level of "no-show" in on-site consultations.

- Although family doctors are globally satisfied with the programme, few joined the programme, making it important to find out the possible reasons and implement improvements.
- It is essential to integrate teledermatology tools to the computerized medical record in health centres and hospitals, and possibly adapt them to smartphones and tablets, to facilitate taking and sending images.

Video on the project: <http://www.parcdesalutmar.cat/mar/Colabora.html>