

Telehealth Strategies for Tanzania- MUHEF

by
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MuHEF's Goal

The central goal is to promote improved health care practices and behaviors by increasing access to health information

MuHEF's Vision

For health professionals to diagnose, treat, and prevent diseases effectively, access to the most current information is critical; access through the internet, and at a cheaper cost than maintaining journal subscriptions

Muhimbili Health Exchange Forum (MuHEF) -Mission

To facilitate exchange of online communication and the flow of current health information to and from districts, regions and health experts within and outside the country so as to improve quality in health.

Rationale?

Tanzania, is currently experiencing a crisis in the availability of health staff.

Given the shortages, staff in rural areas often work in isolation with no possibility of accessing health information and sustaining dialogue with their colleagues in specialized hospitals.

Rationale Continued

Running libraries in Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences (MUCHS) has proven to be costly and ineffective, yet the School of Public Health & Social Sciences generates a lot of research and papers which could serve as a life-line to their colleagues in the periphery.

What to do?

In 2002 the School of Public Health and Social Sciences and the German Technical Assistance, GTZ decided to assess the extent to which this situation can be improved by means of Information and Communication Technology.

Background

A questionnaire was conducted with CHMT members and health staff in Tanga Region to:

- ✓ Assess computer availability and usage
- ✓ Examine knowledge of how to use the computer
- ✓ Assess access to Internet
- ✓ Identify the scientific journals read regularly
- ✓ Identify the information that will be helpful to DHMT members for MuHEF

Findings

- ✓ All district hospitals have access to computers, but not all DHMT members have access to that/those computer
- ✓ 70% district hospitals have access to the Internet
- ✓ There is a low level of basic computer literacy at the district level
- ✓ Access to scientific journals very limited

Roll out of survey to all Regions

Then we sent 230 questionnaires to DHMT members in the 20 other regions. The response rate was 42%

86.3% have access to PC

48.2% have access to internet

28.4% have access to international journals.

Some DHMT members receive two or three copies of a certain journal per year. The number of copies that reached them was few compared to the number of health staff.

Suggestions for inclusion on MuHEF

- ✓ Articles from International Journals
- ✓ National Health Statistics
- ✓ Healthcare Guidelines (Training, Policy & Treatment)
- ✓ Latest or updated health news from MoH or elsewhere.
- ✓ Possibility to put questions to Health experts
- ✓ Articles from local experts

How to act on the findings?

Discussions between Dean of School of Public Health and Social Sciences and a wide spectrum of health specialists from MUCHS, Muhimbili Orthopedic Institute, and Muhimbili National Hospital were held.

Given modest funding available it was decided to try to answer the needs via a website and CD-rom.

Steps towards www.muhef.or.tz

- ✓ Identification of useful articles and discussions with Ministry of Health to obtain guidelines
- ✓ Categorisation of documents
- ✓ Copyright obtained, articles converted into PDF and security features added
- ✓ Hosting options in Tanzania are limited so RSA was preferred
- ✓ MuHEF was launched October 2003

What is on MuHEF website?

- ✓ 400 Articles from local experts and International Journals covering 32 topics
- ✓ National Health Statistics
- ✓ Guidelines (Policy, Treatment & Training) from MoH and WHO
- ✓ IEC information (leaflets, fliers, booklets) for download

What is on MuHEF website?

- ✓ Discussion Forum (Question & Answers)
- ✓ Important websites (related to health)
- ✓ Basic computer information
- ✓ News & Events

Let's have a closer look!

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On the left bar you can also see links to the latest national health [statistics](#), policy, training and clinical treatment [guidelines](#).

More interaction for you: If you have a question about something - be it clinical, to do with the district planning process or even to do with financial management of health resources - simply click "[Ask a Question](#)" on the top bar, type in your question and the email will be directed to a panel of experts here in Muhimbili who will hereby pledge to answer it as quickly as possible.

If you are interested to see who will answer your enquiry, click on "[meet the focal persons](#)"

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- Health Sector Reform**
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- District Health
- Poverty Reduction
- Hosp. Dev Planning
- Malaria

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5 Article(s) of Health Sector Reform Topic Found:

[Joint MoH/ Partners Health Sector Review \(technical Review Supplement\). Reports of the technical working groups.](#): ▲ Ministry of Health; Dar Es Salaam: March, 2001

[A pilot scheme for operationalizing accelerated salary enhancement \(SASE\) for health sector: Study 2 - Operational details \(Final Report\).](#): ▲ Ministry of Health/ HSPS.; Theodore R. Valentine, Dar Es Salaam: July, 2001

[Developing National Systems and Capacity for Contracting, Financing and Monitoring Hospital Services.](#): ▲ Ministry of Health; Dar Es Salaam: May, 2001

[Appraisal report. Health Sector Programme Support \(HSPS - II\) Phase 2 July, 1999 - June, 2004\). Tanzania Mainland.](#): ▲ Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dar Es Salaam: April, 1999

[Second Health Sector Strategic Plan \(HSSP\) \(July 2003-June 2006\).](#): ▲ Ministry of Health; Dar Es Salaam: April, 2003



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A pilot scheme for operationalizing accelerated salary enhancement (SASE) for health sector: Study 2 - Operational details (Final Report)

Ministry of Health/ HSPS.; Theodore R. Valentine, Dar Es Salaam: July, 2001

Abstract:

This report outlines operational details of the SASE (Selective accelerated salary enhancement) scheme for the Health Sector. It discussed salary enhancement in general, the selection process of funded positions, financial costs, monitoring performance and preconditions, assumptions and risks of salary enhancement.

[\[Full Text\]](#) (254Kbytes) in  format

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Treatment Guidelines

Treatment Guidelines From:

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Ask a Question

Type in your question and submit it to the panel of focal persons at Muhimbili who will hereby pledge to answer it as quickly as possible. Please don't forget to specify your email address. Discretion is obvious to us, but typing your name into the text field is up to you.

If you are interested in who is answering your question: [Meet the focal persons](#)

Your Email:	<input type="text"/>
Your District:	<input type="text"/>
Subject:	<input type="text"/>
Your Question:	<input style="width: 100%; height: 150px;" type="text"/>

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[Paracetamol, when was it discovered?, when was & where was it first used as a medicine?, when did it first come on the market as an OTC product?](#)

[What is the best health plan for me?](#)

[A patient complaining about being hypersexuality or having hyperlibido. What will be the treatment or advice? **NEW!**](#)



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Meet the Focal Persons



MuHEF on CD Rom

Given limited internet access/slow connection speed, a CD-rom version was produced early in 2004 and distributed at the DMO conference.

The question and answer facility is not lost, as the question sheet can be printed from the CD and faxed to Muhimbili.

CD is now updated and mailed to districts twice a year

Response

To date, the overall no. of visitors \approx 7800
100 online questions have been received -
covering mainly research, with a few
questions regarding clinical work.

The use of the question facility is limited,
speculation as to why include: website not
sufficiently marketed, slow connection speed
difficult to use for inexperienced end users,
not a culture of asking questions and seeking
help?

Next steps

At a meeting of the experts at the end of 2004, it was decided to seek clinical questions more actively

A pilot is being undertaken with Mnero hospital, Nachingwea district, Lindi Region. This is a church hospital in one of the poorest areas of Tanzania which recently gained internet access. The results are being monitored but it is still very early days

Next steps

It is foreseen to widen the circle of experts to include zonal training centre staff as these are now gaining better internet access

To become more involved in continued education with distance learning possibilities - eg. - 3 online courses in RH, STDs, HIV/AIDS from Engenderhealth have recently been translated into Kiswahili and are available upon MuHEF

To include clinical pictures with case studies!

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