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What do patients expect from eHealth? – let the patients tell us!

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Background & Aim: The draft WONCA policy statement on eHealth (<http://bit.ly/1OXsEMI>) emphasizes the role of the active patient: “Health information systems (HIS) should aim at empowerment of patients and health professionals by supporting patients’ self-management, shared decision-making, easy communication with their primary care provider, and data entry into personal health records which they can share with their care providers.”

Method: Types of eHealth services for patients and statistics on people’s expectations are presented on the basis of population surveys in Finland and other countries. The majority of respondents would like to view their laboratory and imaging results and their own patient record on-line. They would like to book appointments and be reminded of them, and they want to find reliable information on health, illnesses and self-care. Patients also frequently use health-related Internet resources that are not maintained by health care providers. The adoption of personal health records among EU countries is highest in Denmark. Danish patients have been invited to serve as facilitators of small group discussions in the workshop. The patients will present scenarios how they would be using eHealth services and what they expect from their GPs. The participating GPs will respond and share their views, and consensus is searched on their role as providers and users of the services.

Results: The participants will gain understanding on what types of eHealth services patients would benefit from and contribute to their development, and how GPs could be their partners in making the most of those services and avoiding potential risks. The conclusions from the discussions will be collected and published on EQuIP and WONCA eHealth Working Party websites.

Conclusions: eHealth services for citizens and patients are growing rapidly. GPs should partner with patients in developing those services.