

Contribution 1:

Dear all,

I'd like to say again Hi from a medical student in Sofia, Bulgaria and to apologize for my absence in the last discussion (due to intensive work for the International Federation of Medical Students Associations - IFMSA). This week`s topic is really interesting and I'll have to confess my ignorance of the CTCs. In Bulgaria we have never had such project and maybe it could help provide access in remote areas... Nevertheless I'd like to point out how important that type of communication seems to me and off course to congratulate you upon raising attention for it via this international forum.

Questions

How could CTCs be used to provide bottom-up information that could be used by researchers to analyze drug therapy results etc.?

Bearing in mind that CTCs assure access to remote areas, they may be used to collect specific data, invaluable to researchers. Basically research is held in big cities and may not always be representative of all the inhabitants of an area. That is why using Internet to send info and such local centers to collect it, we may have an invaluable source of useful information.

How could health care providers be more intrinsically linked to central databases of information housed in CTCs?

There may be a national or even international campaign and database created especially designed to link doctors and researches with the local databases. In fact Internet and servers are usually powerful enough to host information locally and distribute it internationally. In my opinion the problem lies in creating databases locally and collecting the local information. From that moment it becomes just a matter of computer administration to share that information on the Internet.

Best wishes from sunny Sofia,

Yours

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Contribution 2:

Dear Colleagues,

It is amazing how quickly we reached the last week.

I nearly got used to receiving the e-mails and getting impatient to read the summaries by our marvelous facilitators. It has been a nice discussion and I sincerely wish you all that the things learnt here will be implemented in your country.

For the last time, please find below the comments from A medical student in Sofia, Bulgaria (as you see I also got used to start with that self-presenting sentence ;))

- How can we implement these lessons learnt in our own work?

Our life is also a lifelong educational process. What we have learnt has off course to be implemented in our own work. So let`s examine the ways it could be done:

-personal contacts - talk with your friends. Don`t be afraid to launch discussions about STIs and contraception. Be more open and bear in mind that while embarrassing them a bit, you may also save their life!!!

Having said this, I`m proud to state that I really do open such discussions with friends and people I know (probably that is why I am usually considered as too open-minded, even a bit crazy, but this has not stopped me so far :)) So don`t be afraid to enter into such sensitive areas of discussion - you never know how much you may be helping

-work level: for those involved in healthcare, medicine, social research, media and everything else which deals with prevention campaigns, it is vitally important to bear in mind their objective while working. And the objective is prevention of STIs, more information reaching the target groups and long-term effect on the society.

You may be working on different topics, but your final objective should always be in your mind.

-social level - Even if you are not part of the healthcare or medias in your country, you could always help. My suggestion is joining a non-profit non-governmental organization and helping with prevention in this way. As part of the International Federation of Medical Students` Associations - IFMSA, I may share my impression how powerful NGOs are. Alone you cannot help, but as a part of a NGO, you may have an effect even internationally.

My suggestion here is for our facilitators to compose a list of the most popular and active NGOs to be sent via the server. Like this the participants will see the great variety of NGOs dealing with STIs prevention, contraception, etc and will be able to choose one popular in their own country and join it.

Monday, April 30, 2007

I also have in mind the Y-Peer network. Now it is the perfect moment to promote it and to help participants join it. Personally, I tried to contact and join it via the questions area in the site and the info-mails, but I still haven't received any reply.

Probably you should send out a list of the local contact people? For example, I'd be more than happy to join the network, as well as probably many of the other participants in the IBP initiative.

- With that said, how can we best coordinate new and ongoing media-based initiatives (popular TV series, films, theatre, radio dramas, PSAs, video games, SMS, etc.) produced locally and those produced internationally with other prevention, outreach and clinical service programs in the field?

Again I think that NGOs may have an important role in the process. There are many NGOs working internationally and having local branches and committees. Those NGOs may advocate for policies and may serve as a link between the society and the governmental institutions when it comes to informational campaigns. Large NGOs are also covered in media and their press releases may reach huge audience using the media.

Another point is that specialist, like doctors, should be attracted to join NGOs, campaigns and other activities. As a medical student, I may say that most doctors are glad to participate and help prevention as it is in fact one of their missions. (When you choose to become a doctor, you also choose to devote your whole life in the care for people).

Media should also be attracted in some way to contribute to prevention. Off course to have a long-term effect, there must be some profit. If prevention is a focus of governments, media are paid to convey informational campaigns, there may be a good effect. But in order to make prevention a focus of all governments, policies should be adopted and this is where the voice of NGOs is more powerful than the voice of individuals.

So at the end it becomes a circle where everybody must be involved: government, NGOs, media, companies, and very single individual. It may sound too idealistic, but "Together we can", the only question is are we together against STIs?

At the end, I would like to wish you all the best of luck in implementing the prevention in your everyday life. For me it has been a pleasure and honor to be part of this forum.

Yours,

Kamelia Stanoeva

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Contribution 3:

If we talk of social marketing of sanitation to under privileged groups, we need to get the acceptance and mass appeal of the new media like Cable TV and attractive packaging: infotainment and catering to the client's perceptions. Internet may not be directly useful in such settings. But it can be useful as a support system and experience sharing for activists. Health promotions need new tools to be effective.

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