



Enhancing Elderly Care and Community Support with eHR, e-Health & Telecare – a NGO perspective

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Hong Kong is forecasted by World Health Organization to rank fourth in the world as cities that will have the highest percentage of older adults (40% of the population being 65 or above) by 2050. While our seniors prefer to age in place, we need to identify smart ways to improve their well-being. For over 19 years, SCHSA has been providing telecare services to seniors in Hong Kong through our round-the-clock personal caring and emergency assistance hotline. Call centre enabled telecare service has proven to be an efficient and cost effective way to enable holistic care services to a large group of seniors, giving them a sense of security and enabling them to live independently in the community. Since 2008, nurses who work at SCHSA's hotline centre provide health tips and professional advice to our users with access to the electronic Patient Record (ePR). As the new eHR platform was launched earlier this year, we anticipate that our caring and support service to the elderly people can be enriched.

Yet, it is SCHSA's mission to make good use of technology to continuously enhance the living quality of elderly in the community. While observing the complex challenges brought by an increasingly ageing population in Hong Kong, and witnessing the increasing dependency on public health care resources for medical and related caring and support services for seniors in the community, we want to explore if e-healthcare solutions that are being widely used in other parts of the world can help the development of a proactive

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support model for primary health care for seniors in the community. Our assumption was that a user-friendly e-healthcare solution, when combined with a call centre based telecare service operated by registered nurses, will encourage seniors to become more conscious of their health status, to take health advices, and to learn to better manage their life-style, thus improving their health condition /slowing the rate of deterioration in the longer run.

SCHSA has initiated a small scale e-Healthcare pilot program at an elderly centre in a local district in 2014. Positive feedbacks were received from both the pilot users (who are mostly grass-root seniors, non-tech savvy), and we observed signs of improvement in their health measurement indices. Based on the encouraging outcomes and insights gained from the trial, SCHSA will extend the pilot program to all 18 districts in Hong Kong as a research on how a proactive support model can help reduce health risk and contribute to the overall well-being of seniors who live in the community. We will also cover 'hidden elders' who avoid social contacts and seldom step outside of their homes.

The project promotes cross-sector collaboration among healthcare professionals, elderly centres and tertiary institutions to form a primary care service model, which comprehends the health and social needs to the elderly systematically and provide suitable support through existing community resources. The use of e-healthcare technology platform with telecare services, supported by the eHR infrastructure at the back end, aims to improve the overall well-being of the elderly population in a resource efficient manner. Data collected will serve as a great resource to support Big Data analysis that will generate insights to service operators, healthcare professionals, and policy makers. The pilot project is positioned as an important case study to provide insights to the design of a proactive health management and community care model that aims to optimize support resources to improve the well-being of our seniors for Hong Kong as an aged-friendly city.