



A Study about Improvement of Telemedicine on Board of Norwegian Merchant Ships

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Abstract

Background:

In Norway there is a great deal of interest in telemedicine. Co-operation via telecommunication represents a special situation in healthcare and may be defined as working together with another for a common goal. Co-operation is in general depending on personal, organisational and situational factors. The general objective of the study was to give an overview of possibilities and limits for intersectoral co-operation and networking in maritime medicine by using telemedicine. The study includes an assessment of various organisations working with healthcare services for seafarers. The involved organisations (Norwegian National Centre for Maritime Medicine, Radio Medico Norway, Radio Rogaland, Norwegian Coast Guard, iMed Norwegian Telemedicine AS, Medi 3 AS, several ship owners and crew members of 7 Norwegian ships and 3 offshore platforms) have different formal organisation structures, different professional attitudes and behaviours. The study focuses on successful factors and barriers in the inter-organisational process while working with e-health care services on board of Norwegian merchant ships and on platforms.

Methods:

A web organized interactive interview technique with a semi-structured qualitative interview guide for data collection was used.

Results:

The co-operation process between the involved partners and the complexities of intersectoral co-operation in maritime medicine will be analysed and described. It includes the description of the different operational goals (human, technical, business) of the maritime organisations. The study will try to answer research questions like: are the different maritime organisations ready to establish intersectoral co-operation and networking by using telemedicine and can telemedicine equipment facilitate co-operation in maritime medicine?

Conclusions:

The study will help to better understand the complexities of networking and co-operation within this maritime public health sector.