“Electronic Health Record: Luxury or Need?”

Honorable Mention to researchers of the Institute of Computer Science of FORTH

Researchers of the Institute of Computer Science of FORTH (FORTH-ICS) were awarded with Honorable Mention for their work entitled: “Electronic Health Record: Luxury or Need?” The paper was presented in the 14th National Conference of Healthcare Management in Athens, organized by the Hellenic Association of Healthcare Management.

The authors of the paper were Angelina Kouroubali, Dimitrios Katehakis and Manolis Tsiknakis from the Computational Medicine Laboratory and the Centre of eHealth Applications & Services of FORTH-ICS and Alexander Berler from HL7 Hellas.

The electronic health record (EHR) is a longitudinal electronic record of patient health information generated by one or more encounters in any care delivery setting. Included in this information are patient demographics, progress notes, problems, medications, vital signs, past medical history, immunizations, laboratory data, and radiology reports. The EHR automates and streamlines the clinician's workflow. The EHR has the ability to generate a complete record of a clinical patient encounter, as well as supporting other care-related activities directly or indirectly via interface—including evidence-based decision support, quality management, and outcomes reporting.

E&T Online had the chance to talk with Dr. Angelina Kouroubali, researcher, Institute of Computational Medicine Laboratory, Institute of Computer Science of
FORTH and Mr. Dimitrios Katehakis, head of the Centre of eHealth Applications & Services, Institute of Computer Science of FORTH.

- What are the benefits of using the Electronic Health Record at national level?

The effective use of Electronic Health Record (EHR) enables improved operational efficiency and transformation processes in healthcare organizations mainly in two ways: 1) EHR frees resources from time-consuming procedures, 2) it imposes organized workflows which allow continuous and multidimensional management exchange of information - a prerequisite for the effective implementation of any strategy / policy in Health.

The great value of the EHR as part of an integrated health information system (IHIS) lies in the fact that it allows a distributed collection of clinical data as part of the overall workflow. This information is collected once and stored in order to be available for multiple uses. An IHIS allows administrative staff to gather information for pricing, doctors can follow the effectiveness of treatments, nurses can report an unwanted side effect, and researchers can analyze the effectiveness of drugs in patients.

The expected benefits from the effective use of EHR are:

- Better health and quality of life with continued health care for citizens.

- More sustainable and efficient social and health care (i.e. for the same health care system)

- Development of innovative products and services, thus creating new opportunities for growth

- Is EHR going to be adopted at a national level?

In October 2011, the Ministry of Health sent instructions to implement an EHR system in national hospitals. Because of political uncertainty, the directives of the ministry were not implemented. Our proposal is that the development of EHR should follow international practices, and should be combined with a national strategy. Health data of the citizens should be available anytime to anyone who has the right to access it, through a functional interface of an EHR system.

The selected EHR systems must have proper certification for functionality, but also for interoperability. The “Integrated Care Solutions” of FORTH-ICS is the first and only EHR system in Greece which has been certified with the Eurorec Seal level 2. The EHR system of FORTH-ICS has been deployed in more than 20 health care organizations nationally, as part of integrated health information systems. Systems have been deployed in the regional authorities of Attica (1st DYPE), of Piraeus and Aegean (2nd DYPE) and of Peloponnese, Epirus, Western Greece and Dodecanese (6th DYPE).