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The portable health clinic: An innovative Tele-healthcare system for unreached communities

Rafiqul Islam, Ashir Ahmed and Naoki Nakashima
Kyushu University Hospital, Japan

Statement of the Problem: Two main obstacles to ensuring basic healthcare service in remote areas of developing countries are the poor doctor-patient ratio and insufficient medical facilities. The Portable Health Clinic (PHC) system made it possible to provide primary healthcare services to the doorstep of the rural communities in affordable price by providing telemedicine service in a preventive healthcare way. The PHC system introduces a triage process based on the concept of “Bangladesh Logic” for the people of Bangladesh and it classifies the subjects under investigation into four categories, namely, (1) green or healthy (2) yellow or alarming (3) orange or sick and (4) red or emergent, based on the gradual higher risk status of their health. The subjects under orange and red are primarily diagnosed as in the risky zone who need doctor’s consultancy. However, the major part of the subjects who are diagnosed in the safe and alarming zone (yellow) can be served by the trained health workers without medication and they can be mostly prevented not to shift into the risky zone being under the guided lifestyle. This reduces the pressure on the doctors enabling them to focus on the risky patients who deserve better attention. The Tele-Pathology module of the PHC system enables the rural diagnostic centers operated by the laboratory technologist for producing a quality pathological report with the support of the qualified remote pathologist. Thus, the PHC telehealth care system offers a unique opportunity for ensuring better healthcare service to the unreached rural communities of the developing countries. Although it was developed aiming to the low-income rural communities, it is found equally useful for the urban rich aged community for home delivery service due to its portability and easy operation.

Biography

Dr Rafiqul Islam is working as an Associate Professor at Medical Information Center of Kyushu University Hospital under Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan. Before joining here, he has been working as a Director of Global Communication Center, the ICT based R&D center of Grameen Communications, Bangladesh for about 8 years. Earlier Dr Islam worked in Japanese IT industries for 12 years after completing his PhD in Information Engineering in 1993 from Hokkaido University, Japan. Dr Islam has been associated with various Internet standardization organizations, government bodies and business communities. He has attended many International Conference, Seminars and events of ICT around the world and spoke on ICT for development with a special focus on the healthcare sector. His interest also covers in the areas including ICT for agriculture, education, energy, and environment.

rimaruf@med.kyushu-u.ac.jp

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