CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Clinicians and patients co-creating a new healthcare. The case of TreC-Ophthalmology platform in the Province of Trento, Italy.

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In the outbreak of Covid-19, healthcare systems needed to reinvent the provision of good care to outpatients. The doctor-patient's relationship, even if at a distance, has been established to be a strikingly important factor to both monitor patient’s clinical conditions and to provide reassurance avoiding sense of abandonment.

Digital innovation opened up to new solutions and possibilities that haven’t being considered before, particularly in the heavily test-based-evaluation field of ophthalmology. In this scarcely explored field, the role and cooperation of patients became central and essential. Patients need to become active actors in the management of their own health, teaming up with clinicians throughout a process of empowerment.

A digital teleophthalmology platform, TreC-Ophthalmology, has been designed and created by a multidisciplinary team including actors from the local Healthcare Trust, the Autonomous Province of Trento, the Bruno Kessler Foundation and the competence center on digital health (TrentinoSalute4.0). The digital system, which is prescribed and activated directly by the clinician, allows the direct involvement of patients, autonomously collecting and safely providing information to the clinician allowing a better remote evaluation of patient’s sight. Several self-administer tests have been selected and loaded on the platform, tutorials have been created and training sessions have been performed. Throughout the platform, patients and clinicians have had the chance to communicate, either asynchronously and real-time, via an encrypted chat and a video-meeting channel.

Feedback both from patients and clinicians were collected at the end of a testing phase showing an overall appreciation for the system and the remote interaction from both sides. Participants feedback allowed also to plan ameliorations and new development of the platform (e.g. tele-cooperation setting, devices integration, etc.), supporting new protocols and work organization.

92 patients have had the possibility to use this service so far. Particularly during the extraordinary containment measures imposed at a national level, TreC-Ophthalmology allowed the remote
communication between patients and healthcare professionals in a proactive way while preventing the spread of the virus.

This experience represents a successful attempt towards the innovation of the health care system, supported by digital solutions and the active involvement of its actors, such as patients and clinicians. Thanks to the novelty of the protocol and the characteristics of the platform, which is created by public stakeholders for the local public healthcare, other regional healthcare providers have decided to start using TreC-Ophthalmology platform, validating its efficiency.