

Health Informatics & Technology Conference

October 20-22, 2014 Double Tree by Hilton Baltimore - BWI Airport, USA

Can public health informatics transform public health in Saudi Arabia?

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Improvement in public health was the main reason behind the major achievements in health and wellbeing of people in the past 20th century. Challenges facing public health in the 21st century can be tackled cost-effectively by improving further public health practice, research and learning. For such improvement to take place in this information age, information and communication technologies have to be an integral part of public health practice and education. In developed countries, public health informatics has become a recognized discipline that enhanced and even transformed public health functions. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), with the largest economy in the Middle East has witnessed unprecedented development and growth in healthcare, higher education, and information technology over the last few years. This paper describes briefly such development in relation to public health and proposes to adopt public health informatics as a national-wide integrated and systematic information technology approach to optimize and transform public health practice, research and learning in KSA.

Biography

Ali M Al-Shehri is MD and completed his postgraduate training and fellowship in UK (Fellow of the Royal College of GP, London UK, 1996 and Member of Faculty of Public Health of UK). He is the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Affairs, College of Public Health & Health Informatics (CPHHI, KSAU-HS); President-elect of the Saudi Association for Public Health; and Chairman, Community and Environmental Health. He has published more than 42 papers in reputed journals and served as an editorial member of many reputed peer-reviewed journals nationally and internationally. He is the Winner of the European Prize for Research in General Practice (SIMG, 1991).

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