eHealth in Public Health Services

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At the 58th World Health Assembly, the World Health Organisation, Stressing that eHealth is the cost-effective and secure use of information and communications technologies in support of health and health-related fields, including health-care services, health surveillance, health literature, and health education, knowledge and research urged the member states to consider establishing and implementing national electronic public-health information systems and to improve, by means of information, the capacity for surveillance of, and rapid response to, disease and public-health emergencies[1].

In this issue of the Journal several papers highlight how eHealth solutions have been used in the public health sector in Sri Lanka. The leading article deals with the successful implementation of a low cost solution of gathering cause of death data[3] underscoring the importance of simple but practical solutions. Two case reports of pilot implementations of simple eHealth solution to overcome the data gathering and reporting problems faced by public health midwives highlight the fact that implementation of eHealth solutions at field level is feasible in Sri Lanka[3,4]. In addition to these a current practice article reviews how information and communication technology can be used in the fields of human resources management in public health services[5].

We hope that such initiatives would become widespread in the health sector in Sri Lanka in the years to come and that we would reap the benefits the availability of real time data to help decision making in the health sector in Sri Lanka.

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