
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Rural healthcare kiosks with telemedicine connectivity: Germany starts to offer 1.000 health kiosks within the next years

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A rural healthcare kiosk is an innovative healthcare and social infrastructure for those areas where no physician practices exist and has the goal of not only providing access to healthcare services, but also of preventing social isolation and making possible care, aid to the aged and general welfare. Additionally, the conveyance and development of a digital health competence for the population is an essential task.

A network of healthcare kiosks can provide local inhabitants a first point of contact directly in the rural area of districts in Thuringia, Germany which have limited access to medical care. They serve as points of information, advice and navigation, as a social infrastructure and as preventative healthcare for rural localities and villages, as well as mediators and problem solvers for outpatient care, medical services and nursing. In combination with community care outreach, healthcare kiosks fill the holes in provision of care in extensive rural areas.

The first rural healthcare kiosk was built and opened in 2022 in the Unstrut-Hainich district.

The organization “Gesundes Landleben GmbH” owned by a local foundation and OptiMedis guides and administers the care for residents through this healthcare kiosk. Through a telemedicine link with cooperating doctor’s offices and clinics, residents can have their vital medical data taken at healthcare kiosks and then, using an easily serviced device, securely conveyed to participating medical providers.

Implementation has taken place so the first results can be reported to ICIC 2023. Local stakeholders are already involved in this on-going project. Additionally, this provision of care should be linked with further new forms of care and consultation in order to provide the best-possible enhancement to local healthcare competence and quality of care, while simultaneously avoiding unnecessary waste of time for patients and healthcare providers.

Note: OptiMedis founded as well the first health kiosk in Germany in a deprived urban area in Hamburg and reported on it at the ICIC conference in Dublin in 2017. Today the ministry of health in Germany announced that up to 1.000 health kiosks will be opened in Germany during the next years.