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Medication reminders via SMS

BY ITUMELENG MOGAKI, ITWEB TRAINEE JOURNALIST

[Johannesburg, 24 January 2005] - Cape Town-based company SIMpill and telecoms partner Tellumat Communications have developed a solution for the wireless monitoring and support of patients on chronic medication.

“The SIMpill incorporates wireless technology to monitor and remind patients with chronic conditions to take their medication as prescribed, as well as enable health organisations to be more efficient and cost-effective in their patient care,” says SIMpill inventor Dr David Green.

“When a pill bottle is opened, it delivers an SMS to the central server. Immediately the server receives the incoming SMS, and if this is within the appointed time tolerance set for the patient, this message is stored for statistical purposes.

“Should no message be received, the server can produce a number of responses such as sending a reminder to the patient's handset, a family member, or a healthcare professional.”

Green says current compliance monitoring systems only alert caregivers to non-compliance, while SIMpill alerts all necessary parties to non-compliance as it happens, enabling real-time support and care for patients.

He says there is a huge problem regarding non-compliance with prescribed medication, with 60% of South African patients forgetting to take their medication, leading to high hospitalisation costs.

Green says the SIMpill solution will cost a patient R1 800 a year compared to a non-compliant patient who will spend approximately R7 000 a year on unnecessary treatment and possible ambulance and

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hospitalisation costs.

"These costs of providing medication to people living with chronic diseases are substantial. SIMPill improves a patient's quality of life, a funder reduces overall case management costs and society increases productivity and longevity," says Green.

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