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REMOTE PATIENT MONITORING

Author / organisation	cellular-news
Year recorded	2010
Region	Asia-Pacific · New Zealand
Category	Health
Archive page	kiwanja.net/mobile-database/remote-patient-monitoring/

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Remote Patient Monitoring Trial Using Mobile Technology

Trials of remote health monitoring are underway in New Zealand based on hardware provided by Alcatel-Lucent. The three-month trial focuses on 20 heart disease patients selected by Auckland Hospital (ADHB), and is being carried out by Telecom New Zealand subsidiary, Gen-i.

During the trial, participants are provided with equipment to take daily measurements that are automatically transmitted via mobile phone to a secure online database monitored by the ADHB cardiac team. The equipment also lets patients monitor their own readings. The more frequent data collection will enable medical personnel to more quickly discover changes in health status, enabling quicker medical intervention when necessary, while making more productive use of face-to-face appointments. Once the initial trial results have been assessed, ADHB hopes to extend the program to patients with other chronic illnesses like diabetes.

Worldwide, remote patient monitoring technology is emerging as a cost and time effective tool to keep people with chronic conditions well and out of the hospital. The Alcatel-Lucent TeleHealth Manager allows patients to provide health data using devices they're already familiar with (e.g., mobile phones) in a secure manner, while also providing reminders, alerts and online reports to help patients and their healthcare professionals better understand and manage their conditions. Gen-i is integrating the project's delivery technologies and ADHB is supporting the medical care team with patient care specifications and training.

Chris Quin, CEO of Gen-i, explains that faced with rapidly increasing numbers of patients with chronic illnesses, the health sector is looking for ways to consolidate specialists' time and relieve pressure on them. "The Telehealth initiative combats both these issues while also providing positive health outcomes for patients. Gen-i and Telecom are well placed with the scale, technology and infrastructure to support the solution nationwide and through Gen-i's existing relationships with DHBs and other health organisations.

Quin adds that mobile technologies provide a simple and cost effective platform for this approach. "Patients and health professionals are likely to be familiar with how to use a mobile phone, so set up and training is straight forward. The process is completed in a matter of seconds, providing near real-time monitoring and response," he adds.

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