

The nations' attention to eHealth was renewed after the World Health Assembly (WHA) eHealth resolution (WHA 58.28, 2005) [15] emphasizing on WHO commitment to facilitate eHealth advancement and calling on members to adopt eHealth as an enabler strategy toward the "health Health for all" vision. Upon the new commitment, WHO launched a "Global Observatory for eHealth" (GOe) initiative with the mission of monitoring and guiding the progress in the areafield [11]. During its first year of activity, OGe announced its plan to create-define an indicator for measuring eHealth within and across counties as a part of a strategy for understanding the progress of eHealth across the world-globe [11].

Developing the tools for monitoring and benchmarking ICT use in health care is essential to support health policies [16]. Indicators are necessary for gauging the status of development variables, cross-nation evaluation of development programs, measuring the efficiency of investments and discovering the nations' economic and technological core competencies. Without indicators for quantitative evaluation of development indices, identification of the strengths and the weaknesses of plans and the rationale for applying necessary modifications to current policies would not be available.

The goal of developing a reliable and world-recognized eHealth indicator is currently followed as a priority in cooperation between the United States and the European Union in the eHealth area-field [16]. OECD undertook coordination of global activities with the participation of WHO for developing appropriate eHealth measurement methods and tools [16]. Recently, the results of a three-phase benchmarking study funded by-by the European Commission (EU) [17-19] introduced a measurement framework for assessing eHealth [20]. Despite these efforts, no global consensus is yet attained on the way eHealth should be measured, and the current possible indicators do not cover a wide range of countries.

This calls for further contribution of health organizations, institutions and academia to join the efforts toward development and curation of such a tool. In the climate of increasing demand for valid evaluation of eHealth, we undertook development and validation of a measurement model that is able to assess eHealth status based on the level of countries-country ICT infrastructures.

Despite the wide-range definition of eHealth by different expertise, institutions and information providers, two universal themes can be extracted from all definitions: *Health* and *Technology* [6]. These themes are also used by WHO as major statistics for measuring eHealth in different countries [2]. In our study, we adopted the same themes as the key measures for designing the eHealth indicator. We validate the developed indicator framework against international credible development indices and describe implications of eHealth status of the countries determined by our measuring model.

Methods

Study ~~design~~Design

The study features a descriptive-analytical cross-sectional design.

Design of ~~indicator~~the Indicator

To develop the indicator, first a literature review with emphasize-emphasis on reports from global organizations [2, 8-10, 12-14, 17, 18, 21-24] was carried out to identify the most important factors influencing eHealth. A list of the key factors was then prepared and used for developing a draft measurement framework consisting of several indicators for assessing different aspects of eHealth. The indicator framework was then enriched and refined by sending it to selected experts on the field

Comment [MP2D20]: Doesn't the length of the sentence make it confusing?

Not a : [TYRT] Comment [SMM problem.

Which area? : [TYT] Comment [SMM

Comment [MP2D23]: Area of eHealth that has been pointed out above.

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Comment [MP2D25]: I think this sentence is somewhat ... Do you think it is OK?

Comment [MP2D26]: Important: I want to make sure that the style of this phrase is familiar for a native American reader.

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Comment [SMM27]: Countries in general. The plural form is given in "infrastructures".

Comment [MP2D28]: Isn't better to say countrie's ICT infrastructure?

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