

Dealing with COVID-19 Barriers to Care: Digital Platform to support and monitor chronic patients

Luis Lapao

LV Lapao¹, M Santos¹, M Maia¹, V Pedrosa¹, J Seixas¹, M Mira da Silva³, J Correia⁴, B Heleno²

¹Global Health and Tropical Medicine, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal

²Nova Medical School, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal

³Instituto Superior Técnico, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal

⁴Geneva University Hospital, Geneva University, Geneva, Switzerland
Contact: luis.lapao@ihmt.unl.pt

The Covid-19 pandemic is causing a set of disruptions, especially at the delivery of healthcare services. The pandemic has shown subsidiary health effects like, chronic care, mental health, surgeries, and deadlock in the other diseases' treatment. A digital health platform (PrimaryCare@COVID-19) was implemented to be used by primary care physicians, and nurses, to address both chronic care and COVID-19-related patients at home or traveling. It has been piloted in three Health centers at Lisbon Health Region and it could be scale-up to all primary care in Portugal in the near future. This project was funded by the National Science Foundation to address Primary Care consultations and chronic care services shortage. The clinical primary care processes were studied and a digital workflow was defined using Design Science Research Methods.

This project's innovative digital platform is already covering several dozens of chronic patients while at home and addressing the communication with COVID-19-related patients.

The health professionals (physicians and nurses) are able to safely and rigorously communicate with chronic patients and prescribe the required medicines, as well as inform them about the COVID-19 measures. In case of patients either on quarantine or in isolation this platform also allows for the monitoring and health evaluation.

This eHealth Digital Platform is an opportunity to manage chronic care during epidemics, allowing to follow-up patients, preventing them from becoming uncontrolled and having to go to emergency. The digital platform uses smart algorithms to deal with both medication interactions and vital signs alerts while monitoring, chronic and COVID-19 infected, patients, allowing health professionals to remotely consult these patients at home/travelers (by default with phone, but also via digital videoconferencing) and manage all health information about patients in a secure way (and following GDPR rules).

Key messages:

- The digital platform uses smart algorithms to deal with both medication interactions and vital signs alerts while monitoring chronic and COVID-19 infected patients.

- Digital Platform is an opportunity to manage chronic care during epidemics, allowing to follow-up chronic patients,

preventing them from becoming uncontrolled and having to go to emergency.