
> FIRST DAY / FIRST SESSION

PRESENTER- Welcome to our beginning symposium held within the framework of Grant Scheme Programme for Promotion of the Civil Society Dialogue Between the EU and Turkey - Professional Organizations, that is financed by the European Union and carried out by Turkish Pharmacists' Association (TPA) and The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU). During this symposium, titled "Applications of E-Health and E-Prescription", we would like to introduce our project called "E-Health for All" as well as to get information from competent experts from Turkey or elsewhere on the current situation and possible future scenarios of e-health. Now, I would like to invite Mr. Erdoğan Çolak, the President of Turkish Pharmacists' Association to deliver the opening speech.

Pharm. ERDOĞAN ÇOLAK
(President of Turkish Pharmacists' Association)

Dear Guests,
Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to our symposium "Applications of Electronic Health and E-Prescription" which is organized under the project of "E-Health for All" funded by European Union.

Turkish Pharmacists' Association has never been such a professional organization that only protects its members' professional interests and carries out technical tasks since its establishment. Turkish Pharmacists' Association has always tried to develop a vision aiming to protect and develop public health. We believe that it is very important to produce and realize participatory and long-term projects that would contribute to the development of society in various aspects and amelioration of public health. Pursuant to this perspective, we constructed 4 primary schools, undertook the restoration of a hospital and established a center in Diyarbakir for the drug-addicted street children. These are only a few of our public services...

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In addition, we have carried out 6 grand projects that adopted as principle to use the funds allocated to Turkey by European Union as serviceable as possible and have contributed profoundly to our organizational capacity. We believe that we took successful steps in raising the social consciousness, ameliorating public health and developing the quality of pharmacists' services by these projects.

Today, we are here to introduce our targets and activities concerning the project "E-Health For All" that is directly related to public health, policies on health and national economies. More importantly, we are here to discuss the current situation of e-health in Turkey with all the related public institutions, civil society organizations, public leaders and universities, to share knowledge and experience in order to determine our weak and strong sides, and to create new route maps for raising awareness of the whole society and pharmacists during this transition period.

Dear Guests,
Dear Colleagues,

We are still very distant from the objective of "e-Health for All" put by the World Health Organization in 1979 Almaty Congress. Unfortunately, many countries in the world are also distant from the objectives of the World Health Organization. They suffer from hunger, lack access to safe water, lack access to medicine under healthy conditions, etc... When health is defined as "mental and physical well-being" the picture becomes more formidable.

As a result, the aim of "e-health for all" still keeps its validity and entails the governments and civil society institutions increase their efforts to reach it.

On the other hand, we have witnessed the development of technological applications in the field of health in the 2000s. This technological development -particularly the computer and internet technologies- together with globalization, international trade, regional health networks and use of electronic health cards and records, has made e-health one of the most important issues of the global agenda. It exposed a process that is an unavoidable dynamic to be internalized for countries. The important thing is to understand and evaluate the opportunities and difficulties of this process, and pass through it without pain. This requires

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the harmonic and concerted action and cooperation of actors as well as combination of the applications in the other countries with the structure and dynamics of their own countries.

The main aims of e-health are to promote the quality, efficiency, accessibility, equity and productivity of health services; empowerment of patients, training of health professionals and consumers; promote communication between authorities and standartization of data exchange. While e-health means higher quality and fast health service for patients it also ensures savings in the public budget.

E-prescribing, that has many forms, is getting more and more widespread all over the world. In general, the system is based on preparing prescriptions in an electronic medium and its being visible in the national database for all the actors of the health system. By this way, the responsibility of the physician on the prescription is arranged as it has to be, the control of the prescriptions by the social security institutions is getting easier, and the burden on pharmarmacists due to misprescribing decreases.

Pharmacists have a key position in the establishment of health system database. All the documents are recorded to electronic database by pharmacists. Most of the problems related to the medicine track system can easily be solved by an totally electronic infrastructure.

Electronic health applications have been established within the framework of health transformation project in Turkey. In order to realize the e-Health objectives of Europe, Ministry of Health, with an inter-sectoral cooperation, has started "Turkey Health Information System" studies in January 2003 with the participation of public and civil society institutions, universities and private sector representatives to establish the infrastructure of national health information system. We have advanced considerably until now.

Dear Guests,

Health system faces severe problems in our times. The increase in the demand for and expectations about the health services in parallel to the increase in population, aging population and increase in the average level of income and education; supply of new drugs in the market; production of diseases according to the drugs but not vice versa; increase in the hope of the patients due to new medicines; difficulties in the administration of a complicated health information system that should be reliable, accessible and fast; need for ensuring the best health services available in limited budget conditions can be listed among these problems.

In order to cope with these problems, health service supply systems should be reformed. High quality service in health brings higher costs that becomes more and more unsustainable. It can be foreseen clearly that the situation will be worse as the demographical changes and chronic diseases put additional difficulties on health systems.

When we take all these into account, the need for access to high quality, reliable and cost efficient health services makes the establishment of new health service supply models that are individual-based and prevention-focused strategically important. Although the health sector is seen as a labour intensive sector, improving the health status of society through sufficient, high quality, effective and consumer sensitive production of health services is very much dependent on the technology used. Therefore, e-health is an indispensable factor of the health system. However, it is not problem free area despite its necessity. The main problems can be listed as interoperability, data security and quality, confidentiality and accessibility. Due to the fact that the EU candidacy and technological necessities make the transition to the applications of electronic health unavoidable, benefitting from the experiences of the countries which already use e-health and increasing the cooperation with them will provide us a fast and pain-free transition.

We hope to get information about the ongoing applications and the latest situation in our country as well as about the e-health applications in Europe during this symposium as well as refreshing our knowledge.

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Dear Guests,

This project has significant meaning to us: We are carrying out this project together with The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union within the framework of “Grant Scheme Programme for Promotion of the Civil Society Dialogue Between the EU and Turkey” that is financed by the European Union. We believe this concrete cooperation between the PGEU and Turkish Pharmacists' Association, will establish a ground for the future collaborations on different subjects.

Today, we have expert guests who will give information about the applications, ongoing situation, difficulties and ways of solution in Europe, and who will contribute the formation of cooperation in the field of e-health. I would like to thank each of them.

I hope the symposium will be beneficial and efficient for all of us, our society and country.

Thank you again for your participation.

PRESENTER- Thank you very much Mr. Çolak. Now I want to call Ecehan Balta, R&D Coordinator of Turkish Pharmacists' Association and Project Coordinator of the project “E-Health for All” to explain to you the project “E-health for All” in detail.

ECEHAN BALTA (Project Coordinator)

Good morning and welcome. I will try to summarize the project “E-Health for All” by starting the programme within the scope of which the project is carried out. There will be three headings of my presentation.

First of all, I would like give a short information about the Grant Scheme Programme for Promotion of the Civil Society Dialogue Between the EU and Turkey. Afterwards, I will try inform you about the project of Promotion of the

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Civil Society Dialogue (CSD) developed by Secretariat General for the EU Affairs under this programme. Finally, I will touch upon the general framework, aims and expected outcomes of the project “E-Health for All” carried out by the TPA and PGEU together.

First, I would like to mention the Grant Scheme Programme for Promotion of the Civil Society Dialogue Between the EU and Turkey. The civil society dialog has been supported by the EU projects/programmes with the specialized civil society development programmes, action programmes, scholarships, media development, exchange programmes between professional institutions and universities intensely after the recognition of Turkey as a candidate country in 1999.

European Commission developed a strategy in 2005 that defines the aims and priorities to improve the civil society dialog between European Union and Turkey. This strategy aims to supply information , to increase mutual understanding between the European Union and the candidate countries, to cause different cultures and economic and political systems to get closer to each other and to make the opportunities and difficulties that will emerge by the enlargement of the EU more comprehensible.

Within the scope of this strategy, General Secretariat for the EU Affairs designed the Programme for Promotion of the Civil Society Dialogue Between the EU and Turkey under 2006 Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) Programme to support this dialogue process. Now, I would like to give few information concerning the institutional framework of this project.

The project is co-financed* by the European Commission and has four different components.

- Towns and Municipalities (5M EURO)
- Professional Organizations (3M EURO)
- Universities (9.3M EURO)
- Youth Initiatives for Dialog (2M EURO)

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To intensify and diversify the connection between them, four grant programs with a funding of 19.3 Million Euro have been created. 121 sub-projects are being carried out within the framework of this project. 121 projects, with an average period of 15 months, deserved to get fund ranging from 30,000 to 465,000 EURO.

These projects had a common requirement. They should have been conducted jointly with a civil society organization or an equivalent organization from an EU candidate or member country. Our partner in this project is the Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union. Actually, to benefit from their experiences was one of our fundamental aims. We had a very efficient and effective cooperation with them until now. I want to thank them very much for this.

The objectives of PROMOTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOG PROJECT can be listed as follows:

- I. Enhancing the communication and experience sharing between civil society organizations in Turkey and in European Union member countries;
- II. to ensure a better knowledge and understanding of Turkey within the European Union;
- III. to ensure a better knowledge and understanding of the European Union within Turkey, including the values on which it is founded, its functioning and policies;

The specific objectives of Professional Organizations Programme can be summarized as follows:

- I. To promote a mutually beneficial and sustainable relationship and to establish and strengthen long-term sustainable cooperation and promotion of dialogue between professional organizations in Turkey and in EU Member States and candidate countries;
- II. To encourage exchange of knowledge and good practices on planning and implementation of EU policies.

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I would like to briefly mention the themes and priorities of the professional organizations component well in this part.

Main thematic areas are;

- strengthening the contribution of Turkish professional organizations in the harmonization and enforcement of EU *acquis communautaire* and policies
- Social and health policies;
- Sustainable rural development;
- Common social responsibility.

We are now carrying out a project in accordance with the “Social and health policies” titles of the theme that is strengthening the contribution of Turkish professional organizations in the harmonization and enforcement of EU *acquis communautaire* and policies

The priorities of the programmes are;

- Building a sustainable cooperation between the professional organizations in Turkey and in EU candidate and member countries;
- Promotion of mutual understanding and communication between the professionals in Turkey and in EU member and candidate countries;
- Developing capacity of Turkish professional organizations.

Within this framework, we, as TPA, have developed a project, which is our 6th project funded by the EU, titled E-Health for All. Why did we need to conduct a project related to e-health?

Because, as you know health is the most information/data sensitive field. Combining, analysis and storing the clinical knowledge; access to the latest findings, and promoting the cooperation between health workers have the potential to increase the capacity of health services to an imponderable extent.

It is not possible to reach correct and reliable data concerning drugs and pharmaceuticals in Turkey. E-health applications that would make data collecting process reliable and efficient would contribute to the scientific use of pharmaeconomy by decision makers.

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Pharmacists have a key position in the establishment of health system database. All the documents are put in electronic database by the pharmacists now. Most of the health problems that occurred due to patient track system and problems in repayments can easily be solved by electronic infrastructure.

It would reduce the health expenditure in the long run and also the society would attain fast, reliable and efficient health services by the help of it. Electronic prescription provides a great possibility for the pharmacists on the grounds that it prevents the mistakes in prescriptions and makes the reimbursement system function better. While it means a more high quality and fast health service for the patients, for the public it means huge amount of savings.

To sum up, TPA has developed such a project to be an active component of this process, to be closely acquainted with e-health applications and to contribute positively to the public, patient and pharmacist by ensuring the related actors to investigate the applications in detail.

In this part of my presentation I would like to go into the details of the project. Firstly, let's have a look on the Project Chart.

Project Type	Social and Health Policies
Duration of Project	18 Months
Project Starting Date	30 June 2008
Date of Project Completion	30 November 2009
Project Beneficiary	Turkish Pharmacists' Association
Project Partner	The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union
Project Budget	EURO 131.006, 52
EU Funding Support	EURO 116.464,80 (88,90%)

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The PROJECT TEAM is as follows:


- Project General Coordinator (TPA) : Pharm. Erdoğan ÇOLAK
- Project Monitoring Responsible (TPA) : Pharm. Özgür ÖZEL
- Project Monitoring Responsible (PGEU) : John CHAVE
- Project Coordinator (TPA) : Ecehan BALTA
- Project Assistant (PGEU) : Pharm. Ivana SILVA
- Project Assistant (TPA) : Pharm. Vildan ÖZCAN

The overall objective of the project E-Health for All, in other words our ultimate aim is capacity building in e-health and e-prescription during EU acquis adoption process and creating awareness in the national level concerning the opportunities and difficulties in future enlargement process.

Our project has specific objectives as well;

- Promoting dialog between the organizations and institutions working in the same field
- Developing the opportunities of cooperation and information exchange on e-health and other common issues
- Strengthening the capacity building and motivation of all service suppliers working in this field
- To convey information from Europe and experience from specialized institutions to service sectors related to drug and pharmacy about e-health applications.
- To convey international experience to shed light on the systems to be developed in our country
- Publishing a report and a book that would be a source for the people carrying out a study in the field.

Within this framework, our primary target group is of course pharmacists. So, what are the results of seamless functioning of e-health applications for the interest of every group;

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- Less time for procedural tasks, which gives the possibility to spare more time for patients
 - Easy and on-time reimbursement
 - More efficient patient track system
 - Less burden arising due to mis-prescription on pharmacists

What are the advantages of a “perfect” e-health system; First of all, a more efficient treatment and prevention of diseases becomes possible. A health education for persons become possible. It enables people to participate in the decisions on their health and get information when it is necessary. We can enhance the possibility of individuals to access appropriate treatment and facilitate patient mobility. Therefore, all the individuals applying to the health institutions are among the target groups of our e-health project and e-health applications in general.

Another target group are HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.


The advantages of e-health system for this target group can be listed as follows:

- It minimizes the medical failures by information and warning
- It ensures fast access to information when it is necessary
- It strengthens the efficiency of treatment through the share of best practices.

For HEALTH ADMINISTRATORS, a good e-health system may provide advantages in the areas like:

- striking a balance between budget pressure and rising patient expectations
- making the health sector more productive,
- ensuring better result with lesser resources
- decreasing bureaucracy (particularly in reimbursement),
- facilitating the access to data.

I will talk about the activities of the project later, but now I want to talk about the expected results. We anticipate to obtain the following objectives if we can realize the project e-health for all and most generally if Turkey can realize the e-health applications in a way that all the components of the sector are satisfied;

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- Establishing a system that also meets the expectations of pharmacists in terms of the infrastructure of e-health applications.
 - To promote the dialog between the institutions working in the same field
 - To develop the opportunities of cooperation and information exchange on e-health and other common issues. For me, we have started now to do so with the participation of international guests.
 - To promote the dialog between the institutions and organizations working in the same field. When we consider the diversity of the organizations that the participants represent, it would not be wrong to say that we took a step today.
 - To strengthen the capacity building and motivation of all service suppliers working in this field
 - To learn the international experiences that would shed light on the systems to be developed in our country
 - Publishing several materials, reports, books, etc. that would be a source for the people carrying out a study in the field

Our project has three main activities to realize these objectives and expected results: One of them is the beginning symposium called e-Health and E-Prescription Applications, for which we are here.

Afterwards, we will determine two countries having e-health and e-prescription applications together with the PGEU and conduct working visits to learn their experiences. We will share the experiences of the experts from the EU countries and information and experiences which we will gain until the end of project in the final symposium that we will hold in Turkey again. We will submit them to your evaluation.

We are here today to get to know the existing e-health applications in EU countries in general, in other words to get introductory information in this field; to bring the related foreign actors and related national actors together, and to establish a ground for this meeting; to create a network between the experts coming from Europe and the participants of this symposium; to get information about the existing networks and to be included in them.

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The aim of our working visits is to get information about the good e-health applications in Europe that would be an example for Turkey. We do not of course intent to copy a well established system in the country X, rather we want to get inspiration from them in order to develop a system appropriate for our cultural, social and economic conditions. We are planning to conduct our visits with a delegation and prepare a report afterwards to be share with the experts and authorities in Turkey.

We -as the individuals having more knowledge on e-health and e-prescribing- will be able to compare the e-health applications in Turkey and in the EU member countries in our final symposium. In addition, we will have more knowledge on the system that is wanted to be established in Turkey, and we will have taken a step towards the establishment of a network between related countries.

As I said before, in addition to these activities we think it is very important to establish a network for the civil society organizations and institutions in Turkey. We think the most effective tool for speeding up the information flow and information share is a network. We aim to make the sources published around the world in the field of e-health easily accessible for the experts and authorities. In addition, we will have completed a study specifically on the drug and pharmacy sector at the end of the project. And we will have shared a comprehensive report on the impacts of e-health applications on the drug and pharmacy sector and on what should be the expectations of this sector. We will have been conducted several studies about the translation of reference books into Turkish. We hope we -together with you- will have increased the visibility of the issue by sharing all of our outcomes and reports with the public, ensure the society not to be misinformed, increased the access of the authorities to the necessary information, ensured the pharmacists to be effected as required from the e-health and e-prescription applications.

Thank you very much for listening to me.

PRESENTER: We thank to Ms. Ecehan BALTA for her speech on “E-Health for All”. Now, Pharm. Ivana Silva from the PGEU will give information on the activities of the PGEU about e-health in Europe.