HIFA: Towards universal access to essential healthcare information

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Part 1 – Introduction to HIFA
People are dying every day because of lack of basic healthcare information

_Thousands are dying every day because of failure to give life-saving interventions – despite local availability._

Lack of basic healthcare information is a major contributing factor.
What?

“A world where every person will have access to the healthcare information they need to protect their own health and the health of others”
How?

“How HIFA is an ambitious goal but it can be achieved if all stakeholders work together” WHO 2006
>18,000 members in >170 countries
6 global health communities in 4 languages
Supported by

> 300 organisations worldwide
13 Projects

1. Access to Health Research
2. Almaty 2 (UHC)
3. Citizens, Parents and Children
4. Community Health Workers
5. Evaluating Impact of Healthcare Information
6. Evidence-Informed Policy and Practice
7. Family Planning
8. Health partnerships: What works and what doesn't
9. Library and Information Services
10. Mobile Healthcare Information For All (mHIFA)
11. Multilingualism
12. Newborn Care
13. Prescribers and users of medicines
Part 2 - Universal Access to Essential Healthcare Information – links to UHC and the SDGs
What do we mean by “essential healthcare information”?

• By “essential “ here we mean practical, actionable, guidance for a wide range of healthcare situations commonly experienced in low-resource settings (e.g. common childhood illnesses, complications of pregnancy and childbirth, and first aid)

• As well as for health education (e.g. promotion of healthy behaviour, nutrition practices).

• Such information should be in a language and format that is readily understood, even for those who have low literacy.
Access to essential healthcare information empowers people to protect their and their families’ health.

...and to take appropriate action in case of disease or injury.
Basic, practical, actionable, healthcare information is particularly important in low-resource settings....... 

......where there is a lack of access to trained, well-informed, health workers.
Universal access to essential healthcare information is a prerequisite for, and indeed a key component of, Universal Health Coverage.

"Health for all, primary healthcare, universal health coverage and sustainable development goals are empty shells without timely access to and availability of health information."

Dr Najeeb Al-Shorbaji, former Director of Knowledge, Ethics and Research at the World Health Organization, Geneva
Yet the UN Sustainable Development Goal target (SDG 3.8) and associated indicators on Universal Health Coverage do not mention access to health information!

"Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all" (SDG 3.8)
HIFA representatives were invited to participate in the recent international meeting of the UN Expert Group on SDG Indicators.

We presented the case for including access to essential healthcare information in the SDG target and/or indicators for Universal Health Coverage, especially:

- to help monitor progress towards the UHC (SDG 3.8) and other SDG3 targets
- to indicate progress on the WHO strategic aim of empowering people to have a more active role in their own health
We proposed operationalising this by:

- adding a new high-level indicator SDG 3.8.n on the lines of:

  “Coverage of essential healthcare information for citizens and front-line healthcare workers”

- Or augmenting the existing high-level indicator SDG 3.8.1 along the lines of:

  “Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions (existing list) including access to essential healthcare information, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)”
And implementing it through a fast and affordable route – mobile technology

“Mobile technology is a driving force behind the data revolution that will bring SDG implementation to scale.”

Amina J. Mohammed
Deputy Secretary-General United Nations
Developments in communication technology can make universal access to essential healthcare information a reality.
The ubiquity of mobile phones changes everything

- Mobile phones can enable access, even without a network connection, to the practical healthcare information people need, when they want it.

- Mobile “apps” can feature “how to” video or audio clips that are understandable by all irrespective of literacy level.
And progress is measurable – we already have information on mobile penetration by country.
Part 3 – Achieving Mobile Healthcare Information For All
We have the content...

*First Aid* (Red Cross and Red Crescent)

*HealthPhone* (Mother and Child Health & Education Trust)

*Safe Pregnancy and Birth* (from Where There is No Doctor) (Hesperian)
We have the technology...

2018: >7 billion mobile phones

By 2020:
> 6 billion smart phones
> 70% of world population
We need action

Convene key players:
• Content producers (IFRC, Hesperian, HealthPhone...)
• World Health Organization/ITU
• Governments
• Mobile Network Operators

Expected outcome:
1. Consensus: Desirable & feasible
2. Implementation plan:
   Preloading vs sideloading
Further information


http://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(15)00054-6/fulltext
How you can help

Join HIFA: [www.hifa.org](http://www.hifa.org)
Your expertise/ideas

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Thank you