

Romania Preparedness for Mobile Health in Pandemic Times: the Protection of Medical Information

Abstract

The public health system needs to understand and adapt to new pandemic requirements; they do not have to be successful anymore just in times of health calm. The medical disaster interventions are more and more required either at national or European level, and for this, the public interest prevails over the private one, but we wonder where the line between them is drawn. The policy on the protection of individuals concerning their data in European Union is based on the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. According to this policy, like all the other EU countries, Romania adopted in 2018 the implementation rules and the entire system should act accordingly. Even so, in 2020, due to the pandemic crisis, it seems like everybody forgot about it. More and more, in the media, we find out about people as been infected with Sars-CoV2, but when we open the discussion on which are the personal data that each public institution has to protect no answer is given. Building trust in the health system is also about the trust that personal medical data are safeguarded. The innovative processes to reach better quality healthcare and also those necessary to act and react in pandemic times, such as clinical trials or mobile health. All processes need determined data protection safeguards in order to maintain the confidence of individuals in the rules designed to protect their data. In this context, within our research, we will answer at two main questions: Who owns our medical data and are they be trusted? Have all policymakers and the public been educated? The answers will be given starting from the assumptions that most of the people, the fervent consumers of media, do not know their rights and obligations, and that health administrators are not yet ready to protect them, even the normative system is enforced. The paper focuses on two approaches: public knowledge of rights and obligations on the protection of medical data and the need to develop mobile health. We will emphasise the researched subjects based on qualitative (rules and literature review) and quantitative methods (questionnaires/interviews). We will conclude the paper with a matrix of knowledge on the privacy policy that emphasises the necessity of more clarity from the health system and fewer risks for citizens.