

Mini Track: 'Healthcare Chain Workflow Management by Use of IT (HCHCW)

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Patient visits various organizations or units within organizations to get proper diagnosis and treatment. The role of *healthcare workflow-management by use of IT* is to adjust the contributions of those organizations or units in terms of timing, quality and functionality. Some of these difficulties can be traced back to the heterogeneous nature of healthcare organizations. Professionals require a certain degree of autonomy, whilst workflow management requires a certain degree of standardization. Organizations or units need goals that fit to their specific practice, workflow management requires cooperative goals, or at least, goals that do not conflict. Also, standardization is needed to make full mutual adjustment of organizations possible, even though such standardization may unnecessarily complicate the way of working. As a result, a dedicated business transformation may be necessary. Healthcare organizations have to rethink their boundaries and have to make strategic alliances to be able to cope with the changes in the environment.

The first contribution by Michel-Verkerke, Schuring & Spil "Workflow Management for Multiple Sclerosis Patients: IT and Organization" demonstrates that Healthcare

Workflow management by use of IT is indeed a difficult task. In fact all the themes that play a role when implementing IT in a local context, play a role. However, workflowmanagement has many aspects and the paper concludes that IT serves as one of the elements in a solution, that also includes organisational changes and a new protocol. The second paper by Brown, Schrefl and Warren; "Goal-focused self-modifying workflow in the healthcare domain" introduces a way to adopt workflow-management to specific conditions by turning abstract subworkflows into concrete ones through completion and alteration of template primitives. Finally, Chiu, Kwok, and Wong "Alerts for Healthcare Process and Data Integration" suggests an alert management system for effective workflow management under urgent constraints.

We conclude that the theme of this minitrack is still in its infancy. The development of IS in healthcare is a considerable challenge for individual healthcare organisation. As a result, many of the themes that were mentioned in the call for proposals are "future problems" rather than "present problems" to many healthcare organizations.