

A Virtual Community of Practice Framework to Support Doctors' Practices in National Health Insurance (NHI) in South Africa

Alfred Coleman

*School of Computing, University of South Africa, South Africa
Telephone/ Mobile: 0027124296395/0027731370859, E-mail: colema@unisa.ac.za*

KEYWORDS Virtual. Community. Practice. National. Health. Insurance. Healthcare Services. Computer Mediated

ABSTRACT The introduction of National Health Insurance (NHI) in South Africa poses major challenges to doctors in rural communities who serve high number of patients daily. This paper investigated how doctors in rural hospitals in South Africa use Virtual Community of Practice (VCoP) to share experience with specialist doctors to improve on their practices. A case study approach was used. Ten doctors were selected from ten hospitals in the North West Province. Data was collected using semi-structured open-ended interview questions to inquire about availability of ICT infrastructure, doctors' workload, methods and frequency of consultation, task type, and satisfaction of using computer-mediated tool. Findings revealed that an average of 15 consultations per doctor to a specialist doctor per week was done through face-to-face or telephone conversation. The results led to a proposed VCoP Framework based on the principles of responsibility, connectedness and reverence to assist doctors render quality healthcare services under the NHI project.