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In partnership with
- European Patients’ Forum (EPF)
- European Health Telematics Association (EHTEL)
- Continua Health Alliance (CHA)

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The Model for ASsessment of Telemedicine (MAST) is a framework ensuring a rigorous evaluation of telemedicine applications in the healthcare sector. The model was developed as part of the MethoTelemed project (www.telemed.no/methotelemed), which aimed to provide a structured framework for assessing the effectiveness and contribution to quality of care of telemedicine applications. Accordingly, MAST can form the basis for decision making on use of telemedicine solutions in EU and the European countries.

**A STAKEHOLDER-ORIENTED APPROACH**

The background of MAST is two-fold:

1) A systematic literature review on the impacts and costs of telemedicine services, qualitative and quantitative results, and explicit and implicit methodologies with the purpose of synthesising proposals for further research methodologies.

2) Stakeholder participation through a series of workshops.

The stakeholders represented a wide range of interest groups, among these: patients, health professionals, health insurance, the IT industry, international organisations, and legal and health authorities. First, they were asked to evaluate the suitability of Health Technology Assessment, explicitly the EUneHTA Core Model (www.eunethta.eu), for the field of telemedicine. Secondly, the Core Model was adapted in order to provide stakeholders with a rigorous frame specifically for the assessment of telemedicine applications.

**THREE IMPORTANT EVALUATION STEPS**

MAST works with 3 steps in an assessment:

1. Preceding considerations.
3. Assessment of transferability of the results.

**Preceding considerations**

The first step of MAST consists of a number of preceding considerations in order to determine whether your institution can carry out the assessment at this point in time. One issue is the maturity of the application: Is the technology at a mature and steady state so that effects and costs can be assessed? Another issue is at which organisational level the assessment should be carried out: Can the organisation provide enough patients to perform a statistically significant result? If not, it should be considered to collaborate with other institutions and perform the assessment a regional or national level. A number of more practical guides for how to use MAST can also be found here.

**Transferability of results**

Another important goal is to assess the transferability of results to other settings and countries from studies of specific telemedicine applications. Hence, the third step of MAST is a so called ‘transferability assessment’, i.e. determining whether particular demographic, epidemiological, organisational or economical issues have affected the outcome of a particular study, and to what extent the results can be transferred to e.g. a larger patient group, another organisation, or other countries.

A ‘MAST Manual’ is publicly available (www.renewinghealth.eu/project-overview/overview/assessment-method) and describes the domains in detail, including information on topics, methods for data collection, and outcome measures for each domain. A number of more practical guides for how to use MAST can also be found here.

**MAST IN RENEWING HEALTH**

In the RENEWING HeALTH project, MAST will be empirically tested. The model is used as the standard framework for assessment in more than 20 local pilots in the different European regions that are part of RENEWING HeALTH. The pilots encompass a range of different short, medium and long term interventions for COPD, diabetes and heart failure patients via telemedicine applications and Personal Health Systems.

**MAST IS FOR ALL TO USE**

MAST is specifically developed to ensure the development of multidisciplinary and rigorous assessments of telemedicine applications in all of Europe. For that reason, a MAST Manual and MAST Toolkit is made publically accessible to anyone with an interest in the assessment of telemedicine applications. Documents, toolkit and education videos are available at www.renewinghealth.eu/project-overview/overview/assessment-method & www.mast-model.info

**REFERENCE:**