

GLOBAL TELEMEDICINE - MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE MILLENNIUM

Malina Jordanova, MD, PhD, Frank Lievens

Telemedicine & Telecare International Trade Fair

www.telemedicine.lu

mjorda@bas.bg, telemedicine@skynet.be

The need to develop and organize new ways of providing more efficient healthcare services, coupled with major advancements in Information and Communication Technology, has resulted in the increased use of telemedicine and telecare applications over the past decade.

The European Commission's health care telematics program defines telemedicine as a "rapid access to shared and remote medical expertise by means of telecommunications and information technologies, no matter where the patient or relevant information is located." A key characteristic of telemedicine is its ability to transgress boundaries, implying the potential to create a truly 'borderless' world, at least from the healthcare perspective.

In the firm belief that telemedicine is the key for increasing the quality and efficiency of health care service and achieving optimal healthcare for anyone, at any time, from anywhere, and realizing that the emerging telemedicine market needs a specialized meeting place Foires Internationales de Luxembourg ^[1] (www.fil.lu) organized the first Telemedicine & Telecare International Trade Fair (TTITF) in Luxembourg, April 10-12, 2002 (<http://www.telemedicine.lu>).

The significance of the event was highly evaluated by national and international authorities. Welcome messages were presented by Chairman of the Board of "Societe des Foires Internationales de Luxembourg, S.A." Mr. Alain Georges, prof. Jean-Claude Healy, Head of Information Society Technologies, European Commission, DG Information Society, Mr. P. Kantchev, ITU, Telecommunication Development Bureau, Major General Roger Van Hoof, MD, Commander of the Medical Component of Belgian Defense and a Chairman of the Committee of Chiefs of Military Medical Services in NATO (COMEDS) and Mr. Carlo Wagner, Minister of Health and Social Security, Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg.

The strategic goals of the first Telemedicine & Telecare International Trade Fair 2002 were:

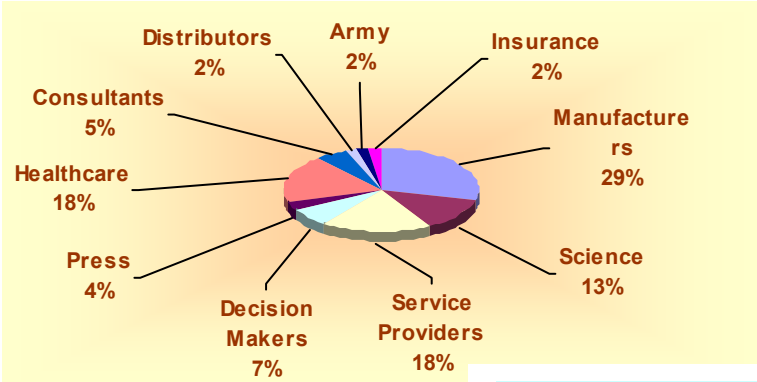
- To review the status of the telemedicine and telecare,
- To explore new ways to improve efficiency of health care service applying state-of-the-art technology,
- To define a roadmap for further development of e-health / telemedicine market,
- To become a nesting place for new business partnerships involving scientific groups, institutions, associations, media, companies of all sizes, etc., covering the various fields of activity contributing to the implementation of Telemedicine

The Trade Fair brought suppliers of telemedicine equipment and services, as well as providers in the field of e-Health, together with buyers, healthcare professionals, institutional decision makers and policy makers.

The centerpiece of the Trade Fair was the exhibition, where suppliers and users of telemedicine products, technology and services exchanged information, established new business relationships or reinforced existing ones, searched knowledge workers, found out solutions, looked for partners and new markets, viewed a wide range of telemedicine solutions currently available on the market (fig. 1 Exhibitors).



Fig. 1 Exhibition



With 36 exhibitors from 13 countries and with over 600 industry and medical participants coming from 58 countries around the world, the first Telemedicine & Telecare International Trade Fair was more than successful (fig. 2).

Fig. 2 Attendees at the TTITF 2002

An integral part of the event was an extensive Educational and Information Program. It allowed participants to get more in-depth information on ongoing projects in the world of telemedicine and newly developed telemedicine technologies and applications. 42 formal and virtual presentations from 26 countries were included in the program (fig. 3 and 4).

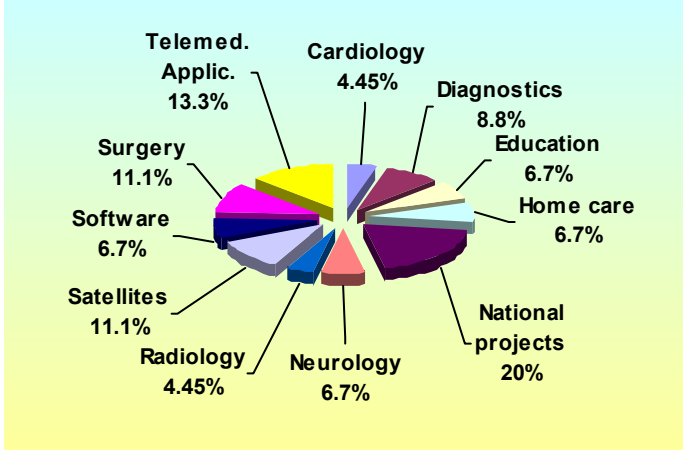


Fig. 3 Distribution of presentations per topic

Part of presentations covered demonstrations of commercial product prototypes. Presentations from research units offered knowledge on the beyond state-of-the-art products and technologies and defined the roadmap for further development of the telemedicine, while presentations from healthcare centers stressed on telemedicine applications for patient monitoring and on efficiency on telemedicine application.

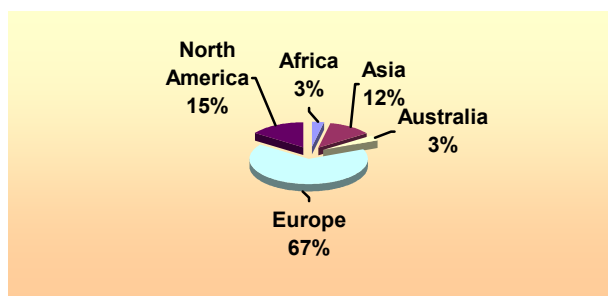


Fig. 4 Distribution of presentations per continent

Considerable emphasis was placed on the future development of telemedicine in developing countries (in cooperation with International Telecommunication Union / Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU/BDT) and on the currently available resources and programs (in cooperation with European Commission - IST Program, Systems and Services for

the Citizen, Applications Relating to Health). In cooperation with some of the Trade Fair's partners (EC, ITU, NATO, International e-Health Association, Deloitte & Touche, etc.) the TTITF featured a range of well attended and highly acclaimed discussions and debates focusing on telemedicine market, fulfillment of users' needs, telemedicine innovations and business, the role of telemedicine and tele-consultation within NATO.

In conjunction with the TTITF's official program several other meetings were held:

- Conference on Telemedicine in Nuclear Medicine organized by Luxembourg Society of Nuclear Medicine in cooperation with AGFA Health Care,
- Meeting of NATO Telemedicine Panel,
- Meeting of European Association of Hospital Managers Executive Committee,
- A debate "Show me the Market" organized by Deloitte & Touche.

The Trade Fair's media corner offered a look at over 20 different publications, books, magazines, journals, reports, courses, websites and information services, all related to the field of telemedicine.

TTITF 2002 was the first telemedicine business event in Europe. The message through the entire Trade Fair was "After more than 10 years of intensive research it is now time to act if healthcare is ever going to realize the benefits that telemedicine has to offer". As the results from the first TTITF were so encouraging, the organizers believe that it is the first one from a long list of annual Telemedicine Trade Fairs.

The second annual Telemedicine & Telecare International Trade Fair was scheduled for April 9-11, 2003 in F.I.L., Luxembourg.

Once again the aims were:

- to offer a broad view on the status of telemedicine and telecare products and services,
- to explore new ways to improve the efficiency of the utilized state-of-the-art technology in healthcare provision, and

- to define a roadmap for further development of the telemedicine market as well as once again to
- to bring manufacturers and suppliers of telemedicine equipment and services and providers in the field of e-health, together with buyers, healthcare professionals and institutional decision and policy makers.

The event planned once again to offers buyers and users hands on experience and knowledge about currently available products, technology and applications. It also includes an extensive Educational and Informational program, which goals were to cover the results of recent pilot projects, to summarize the national experience in e-Health and training sessions by exhibitors. The meeting had therefore provided a highly beneficial forum for advancing international collaboration in the area of telemedicine.

Exhibitors were encouraged to promote their company, products, services and new introductions through Trade Fair's regular e-mail newsletters and at Trade Fair's website, which although exists for less than 3 years, is very well attended (fig. 5). They had the opportunity to make presentations in the educational program related to projects or specific experiences they have in the field of e-health, too.

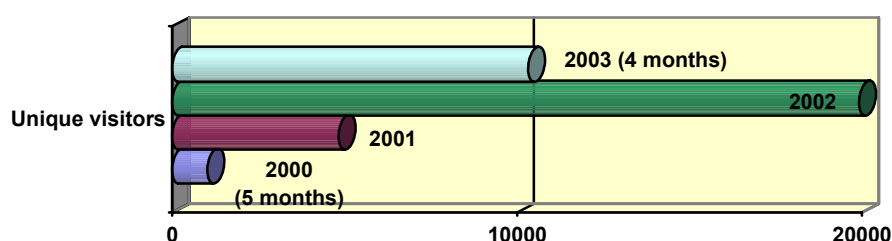


Fig. 5 Unique visitors of TTITF web site www.telemedicine.lu

During the preparation of the TTITF 2003 emphasis was placed on:

- Cost effectiveness and impact assessment of telemedicine in cooperation with European Commission - Information Society Directorate-General and Deloitte & Touché,
- European Telemedicine market in cooperation with Frost & Sullivan
- Future development of telemedicine in developing countries in cooperation with World Health Organization [WHO], International Telecommunication Union / Telecommunication Development Bureau [ITU/BDT] and Africa Telehealth Group,
- Intelligent Biomedical Clothing: The Future of Personalized Health Management? Mr. Andreas Lymberis, European Commission, Information Society Directorate-General,
- Social and economic efficiency of telemedicine in cooperation with Russian Telemedicine Foundation and on
- The application of 'SmartCards' as a pivotal tool for pan-European e-Health realization in cooperation with European Space Agency, TM-Alliance
- Using and sharing health information in the 21st century in cooperation with European Health Telematics Association [EHTA].

According to the preliminary plans the Educational and Information Program was organized around 9 main topics (Fig. 6). 52 presentations from 25 countries from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and North America were accepted for oral presentations. For the first time

special attention to was dedicated to a new, just emerging area of telemedicine – telementalhealth.

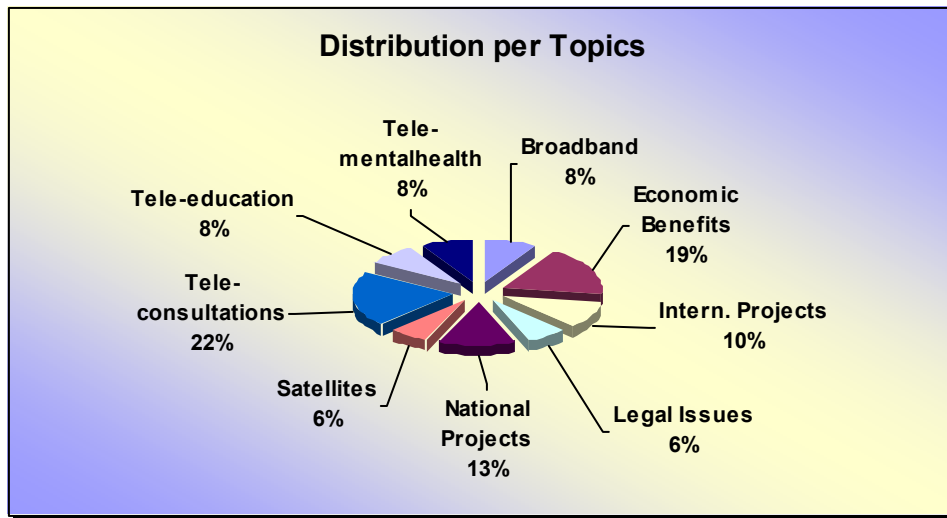


Fig. 6 Topics of Educational and Information Program TTITF 2003

Unfortunately, with the growing uncertainty surrounding a possible armed conflict in Asia, at the beginning of March 2003, Foires Internationales de Luxembourg, organizers of the Telemedicine & Telecare International Trade Fair, have decided to postpone the 2003 edition of the Trade Fair. The next event is scheduled for **April 21-23, 2004**.

Make your plans now to be part of the next edition of the Telemedicine & Telecare International Trade Fair 2004!

Contacts:

Post: Foires Internationales de Luxembourg (FIL), 10 circuit de la Foire Internationale, L-1347 Luxembourg,

Phones: +352 4399 1; +32 2 269 84 56; +359 2 979 70 80

Fax: +352 4399 315; +32 2 269 79 53; +359 2 979 70 80

e-mails : info@telemedicine.lu; telemedicine@skynet.be; mjordan@bas.bg

<http://www.telemedicine.lu>

Note:

[1] F.I.L. = Société des Foires Internationales de Luxembourg S.A.

The aim of the "Société des Foires Internationales de Luxembourg S.A." is to organise, promote, and host trade fairs and specialised shows, to hold seminars and conferences as well as all other economic events at national and international level. Luxembourg City owes its first fair to John the Blind, Count of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia, in 1340. During the next centuries, the central geographical location of Luxembourg, its fiscal advantages and its favourable commercial laws attracted traders and merchants from all over Europe. The Official Trade Show of Luxembourg (Foire Commerciale Officielle du Luxembourg) was founded in 1922, preceeding the foundation of the International Trade Fair of Luxembourg (Foires Internationales de Luxembourg P FIL).