

## **The virtual hospital: the KSYOS TeleMedical Center in The Netherlands**

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With more than 2500 doctors performing Teledermatology (TD) in The Netherlands, this service belongs to the most fully developed TeleMedicine tools. It enables the a general practitioner to provide a dermatologist with digital images and short description through a secure internet connection. The dermatologist can respond within two working days. By doing so, in 6809 TeleConsultations 65% of all live referrals could be prevented. Mean response time of the dermatologist was 5.6 hours. General practitioner and dermatologist experienced TD as enrichment of their work, with emphasis on quality improvement and learning effect. In only 7,4% of all TeleConsultations, the general practitioners stated that the answer had not helped them.

Increased fun, higher income and better quality of care by TD will lead to substitution by dermatologists conventional dermatological care by innovative TD, thus leading to extra volume growth necessary to cope with ever increasing future demands. The price of a TD consult lower than two third of the mean total costs of a live dermatological patient will lead to cost reduction. Thus, TD leads to a vast reduction of referrals and a minimal cost reduction of 25%.

However, the safe, prosperous and socio-economic balanced introduction of TD demands its' provision by certified (virtual) TD centres that meet minimal quality requirements and that guarantee reasonable reimbursement of general practitioner and dermatologist, additional to regular reimbursement. The use of safe internet applications guaranteeing all patient data to remain traceable, integer, accessible and controllable, the monitoring of TD's efficiency increasing effect and certification of technology, medical aspects and of the TD centre are minimally required to meet quality standards.

The first hospital in The Netherlands that only provides telemedicine services is KSYOS TeleMedical Centre (TMC). TD provided does not only include software, but also hardware (digital camera, docking station and card reader), quality and safety monitoring, helpdesk, on site monitoring, billing, administration, education, and malpractice insurance. Doing so, KSYOS TMC has provided 15000 TD consultations to patients through its' officially reimbursed national network of 2000 regionally working general practitioners and 135 dermatologists.