Telemedicine Support on Maternal and Newborn Health in Mongolia - Analysis of Content in Communication

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Telemedicine service, as a model of providing medical advice at distance, has been proven to be a cost effective, equity and efficient health care. These advantages are attracting policy makers, hospital managers and health care providers worldwide and particularly, countries like Mongolia, where there are geographical and socio-economical barriers create disparities for adequate access to health services. “Telemedicine support for maternal and newborn health” project started from 2007 and Campus Medicus network is used as a platform for providing telemedicine services. This study designed to provide a content analysis of communication among remote physicians and experts for a period of 4 years from the project. Communications of two groups of stakeholders (experts and remote physicians) were analyzed using appropriate coding scheme for each necessary category. Conceptual and relational content analysis was used and descriptive statistical analysis was provided using SPSS 16 software. Totally 1170 cases were analyzed. Common request for second opinion were decision support for complicated clinical cases 1076(92%), distance learning 70(6%), and sharing clinical experience 24(2%). Prevalence of obstetric complications was maternal disease, complicating pregnancy and delivery 630 631(54%). Experts’ response rate to physicians’ request was 94%. The percentage of the locally managed cases out of the total consulted cases accounted for 86% and the percentage of referred cases to upper level care in Ulaanbaatar city accounted 14%. Remote physicians are utilizing TM service not only for obtaining experts’ advice, but also for sharing clinical experience and continue medical education. Obstetric problems, particularly maternal diseases, complicating pregnancy and childbirth were leading cases for remote physicians for utilizing telemedicine services to have second opinion.

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