

**Mobile Health (m- Health) in the developing world:
Two decades of progress or retrogression**

Keynote Lecture

Professor Robert S H Istepanian,
Institute of Global Health, Imperial College, London, UK

Summary

The global trend of healthcare digitization is moving fast and in almost every conceivable medical discipline and application area. It is predicted that the global healthcare landscape will completely shift within the next decade or so. This change is mostly driven by the unprecedented proliferation of mobile health or (m-Health). For nearly two decades mobile health (m-Health) was hailed as the greatest and the biggest technology breakthrough of our time by many healthcare leaders and policy makers. The World Health Organization (WHO) described it as 'the potential to transform the face of health service delivery across the globe'. Yet, the impact of mobile health particularly in low and middle-income countries (LMIC) and resource limited settings remained sketchy and sporadic and the global health disparities remain wider than any other time before. However, there is still increasing enthusiasm by clinicians, healthcare providers and policy makers in these countries in m-Health. Mobile health has the potential to overcome many of the chronic health care challenges and deficiencies in these countries, such as poor care facilities, limited access to medical care, shortages of health care workers & specialists in remote areas and others. It can also provide unique opportunities in these countries to balance the increasing demands of quality of care improvement and better healthcare access at lower cost. However, many of the opposing interests and objectives of the m-health stakeholders hindered the large scale progress and scaling up process of mobile health services in majority of these countries with many important and much needed mobile health services are still either no existence or sporadic, especially in these setting, whilst hundreds of millions of people use smart phones on daily basis in these countries. The talk will illustrate these causes of the current status quo of mobile health in LMIC, address the challenges and opportunities of mobile health for improving healthcare services in these countries. The lecture will also present the new vision of mobile health in line of the latest WHO's global digital health strategy and digital intervention guidelines.