Patient Portals in Africa

Description: The African patient portal market is in its nascent stage. Most of the providers have been developing in-house applications, which focus only on the administrative and billing applications. The government's prioritisation of eHealth will eventually lead to the growth of patient portal adoption. This study takes a look at the overall patient portal market in Africa with a detailed analysis of the South African and Kenyan markets. It also provides the major drivers and restraints for market growth. In addition, the advantages of adopting patient portals are highlighted along with the industry trends. The different types of patient portals, the elements impacting their growth, and a brief customer analysis are also included.

- The evolution of consumer-directed healthcare has increased the access to medical information through the Internet in which the Health Information Technology (IT) plays a significant role. Patient portals allow patients to engage with their doctors, payers, and other healthcare providers over a click and also motivates them to take a proactive role in their health.

- Patient portals can create growth by transforming relationships between patients, physicians, and payers while improving efficiency and lowering the cost of delivering health care over the long term.

- Government prioritisation of eHealth and support to implement eHealth will eventually impact the growth of patient portal adoption.

- The providers of health care have no choice but to leverage IT tools that consolidate health information about diagnosis, medication, and medical care from different providers in the past to improve clinical outcomes through enhanced decision making.

- Most of the providers in the African continent have been developing in-house applications which focus only on the administrative and billing applications, usually off platforms such as Microsoft's Dot Net technology, SharePoint and other web-based content management solutions. Few still use legacy systems.

- Collaboration among stakeholders can lead to the deployment of patient portals across a huge patient base.

- The providers/payers in Africa do not see an urgent need for implementing patient portals. However, they understand the value proposition and will most likely implement it in future considering the advantages of patient engagement.

- The strong penetration of mobile technology in Africa has been a backbone to the development of mHealth and telemedicine, which tend to hinder the adoption of web-based portals.

- There is a minimal existence of integrated clinical information systems, which is one of the major silos of information required in the back-end to implement patient portals.

- Patient portals can provide immense benefits for the treatment and management of chronic illnesses.

- For best results, providers should look into both web-based portals and mobile technologies to interact with their patients in real time and meet their needs.

- mHealth has seen early adoptions rather than the web-based portals in South Africa. There has been a predominant uptake and usage of applications based on the iOS platform by the healthcare provider community.

- Currently, patients are more likely to get their medical records printed from an electronic health record (EHR) rather than accessing it through the Internet due to inadequate
awareness of eHealth.

- Patient portals are projected to be used as extensively as online banking is used today.

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