

HIFA2015: to achieve goals – more support is required

“Our shared vision is a world where people are no longer dying for lack of healthcare knowledge.”
Statement on HIFA2015 website.

HIFA2015 (Healthcare Information for All by 2015) is a global network of more than 10,000 members which aims to improve the availability of lifesaving information in developing nations.

Based in the United Kingdom, HIFA2015 is now supported across 167 countries by at least 2,000 separate organisations. These include the British Medical Association, the Royal College of Midwives and Publication Integrity & Ethics (PIE).

The aim is to stop thousands of people dying each day for want of simple, low-cost interventions. HIFA2015 not only recognises the need to provide professionals with improved information – it also promotes the value of educating anyone who provides basic care.

Campaigners behind the organisation believe that access to relevant, reliable and user-friendly health information is vital in meeting both the World Health Organisation’s goal of ‘Health For All’ and the United Nation’s ‘Millennium Development Goals’.

Are these goals achievable? Will every mother, care worker and doctor of the worlds’ poorest countries really have access to sufficient information?

According to several key figures in the medical world, the answer is yes. These people include BMJ editor Fiona Goodlee who wrote an essay calling for universal healthcare information in 2004 and partly inspired the foundation of the group. This is only possible, however, if more support is gained and adequate funding is secured.

The good work that HIFA2015 promotes can already be seen taking immediate effect with the start-up of several other organisations. Just one example of this is Doctoori. This UK-based organisation focuses on the development of the healthcare sector in the Arab nations with online content provided by the NHS. “HIFA has been a massive inspiration in founding www.doctoori.net. It has reinforced the need to bring high quality, reliable and accessible health information into the Arabic language,” said Dr Zain Sikafi, CEO and Founder of Doctoori.

As a proud supporter of HIFA2015, the Publication Integrity & Ethics believes that the organisation needs a much stronger backing if it is to achieve its lifesaving ambitions.

The HIFA strategy can only succeed in improving global healthcare knowledge in 2015 and beyond if the message is spread on a mass scale.

Just one of the statements on the HIFA2015 website states that 7 out of 10 African children with malaria receive mismanaged treatment.

That is 2,000 young lives lost each day in Africa alone. HIFA2015’s mission is not only important, it is urgent.