

## Dr. Robert Istepanian to Discuss M-Health Technology at the 11th Armenian Medical World Congress



Through his past 20 years of research, Robert Istepanian, PhD, has helped to alter the healthcare landscape through information and communication technologies worldwide. As Professor of Data Communications for healthcare and the founding Director of the Medical Information and Network Technologies Research Centre (MINT) at Kingston University in London, Dr. Istepanian has become the conduit that is bridging the gap between technology and medicine. This coming July, he will be speaking about his pioneering work at the Armenian Medical World Congress in Los Angeles, and discussing how “M-Health” has become the fastest growing phenomena in healthcare.

Dr. Istepanian is widely recognized across the globe as one of the leading authorities in area of mobile healthcare, and the first scientist to coin and define the concept of M-Health—a revolutionary approach in healthcare that is affecting the lives of millions of people around the world. M-Health broadly encompasses the use of mobile telecommunications and network technologies as they are integrated within mobile and wireless healthcare delivery systems. Over the last decade, healthcare has evolved in response to the constant development of ICT domains such as: telemedicine, tele-health, e-health, and now M-Health. The last of the pillars, M-Health, is widely used today and utilized by major global businesses, international bodies, and research institutions.

In recent years, this widespread and unprecedented growth of M-Health systems and services in the global mobile healthcare market are estimated to have a worth between \$50 and \$60 billion dollars. The Bill Gates Foundation has already implemented the system in Africa. Many more countries, such as India, have begun to follow the trend. The system brought to fruition the “Mobile Diabetes Management,” a concept that was first introduced by Dr. Istepanian’s team, where patients can use their phone to control their glycemic levels, measure medicine intake, and be alerted with text messages regarding their treatment. The M-Health system uses the necessary feedback mechanism, and data is seamlessly sent back and forth wirelessly from patient to doctors and nurses.

Dr. Istepanian’s work has become seminal, particularly in countries ravaged by war or those that have succumb to economic peril. The doctor is currently publishing his work regarding simple text messaging systems for enhancing the educational knowledge of pregnant women with diabetes in post conflict regions. He notes that “there is also large work taking place in Africa and India on the use of point of care diagnostics using smart phone technologies for early detection of HIV, TB, and other key diseases.”

Out of the 200 journal and conference papers he has published, Dr. Istepanian also published one of the first international journal papers on telemedicine in Armenia. It was the first domain in information and communication technologies. The programs, which were started in the 1960’s, provided remote consultation and interactivity without the need of the patient being physically near the doctor. It is still widely used in areas like India, however, Dr. Istepanian hopes that M-Health will replace the older systems that are still run on computer desk tops used in the 1980’s and 1990’s, and replace them with the M-Health system that is compatible with today’s iPads and smart phones.

“M-Health will have a huge potential for providing better healthcare services in Armenia, especially with the high volume of smart and mobile phone usage in the country,” says Dr. Istepanian. “It can make a drastic difference in the remote regions where access to healthcare is limited.” Dr. Istepanian envisions a system in Armenia where trained nurses equipped with the M-Health system devices can send all the data of patients who do not have access to doctors and hospitals and be able to receive instant expert advice on treatment with just a click of a button, or a swipe of a screen. Dr. Istepanian emphasizes the importance the Armenian government can play in carrying out these revolutionary health improvements. “The Armenian Medical World Congress will bring together such powerful ideas where scientists, healthcare professionals, government officials, and policy makers are present under one roof and the implementation of such technologies can be explored in order to improve healthcare delivery in Armenia,” states Serineh Melidonian, MD, Scientific Committee member.

At the Armenian Medical World Congress, Dr. Istepanian will explain the application and prospects of M-Health, and how this technology can greatly shift the way medicine is practiced today. “My hope is that through the Armenian Medical World Congress, we can collectively work together to implement the M-Health technology in Armenia,” states Dr. Istepanian.

For more information and to register for the 11th Armenian Medical World Congress, please visit our website at [www.aamsc.com/congress](http://www.aamsc.com/congress).