

HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEMS AUDIT OF SOUTH AFRICA (Poster)

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The lack of a national policy or guidelines for human resources for Health Information Systems (HIS), as well as a lack of standardization of software and hardware necessary to process data is thought to contribute to the poor quality of information. As a result, information is not optimally used by health managers at all levels of the health system for decision making, to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate health services.

In 2006, HST carried out an audit that involved a situational analysis of human resource issues related to HIS, the skills of staff working in HIS and IT equipment at all levels of the South African HIS. In particular, consideration was given to the hardware and software requirements of the DHIS1.4. software that will be rolled out to provinces shortly. Data was collected through telephonic interviews conducted by HST interns and recorded in an electronic data collection tool specifically designed for the audit. The findings show that 20% of staff members had received less than one weeks training on the DHIS software, which is the bare minimum required to pass on some of the skills necessary for them to do their work. Of the 677 staff members interviewed many computers need upgrading to support the DHIS 1.4, while 25 members do not have any access to a computer. In addition, 78 did not have access to printers.

A comprehensive report of the findings and recommendations of the audit have been generated for each province as well as a National Report. By providing a 'picture' of the state of HIS in South Africa, the results of this audit can serve as a valuable basis from which the National Department of Health can develop a policy document aimed at guiding provinces toward improving the quality of information emanating from their health information system.