



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Aethra Technology Facilitates Teleconsulting and Distance Learning at Bucharest's Emergency Hospital

Emergency Hospital in Bucharest is the most important hospital of its kind in Romania and is at the forefront of technical innovation in the medical sector. It was the main promoter and is now at the centre of the National Trauma Network – a prominent national project, which links Regional Emergency Hospitals by video communication for first response and better management of patients with multiple traumas. In January 2002, Emergency Hospital Bucharest won government funding to carry out a research project for “Optimising the use of Advanced Technologies in Critical Patient Care and Disaster Conditions”. The hospital opted to use the funds for a telemedicine research project and consequently set up a video communication system within the hospital.

For its telemedicine project, the hospital chose to utilize the technology offered by the Aethra Vega Star Silver after positively evaluating the combination of high-quality and ease-of-use, and thanks to the excellent technical support provided in the region. Aethra (www.aethra.com) is able to create sector specific solutions thanks to its long experience in video communications, broadband technology and telemedicine. The hospital currently uses the video communication system to facilitate and improve working methods and to provide distance-learning opportunities.

The hospital's library, now doubling as a video conferencing room, is often used for highly effective distance learning sessions. The videoconference system, located in the operating theatre, sends live images to the library where resident doctors and medical students are able to watch operations taking place in real time. This enables both doctors and students to gain invaluable first hand experience during their surgical training. The system is able to capture and send 3 video images thanks to multi video inputs and depending on the events taking place in the operating theatre, the on-screen image viewed by participants can be switched between the video communication system's camera, the video camera embedded in the operating theatre's lighting system and the endoscopic system. In addition, every Tuesday, the leading institute of emergency medicine in Romania: SMURD (Medical Emergency Resuscitation and Descarceration Unit) holds distance-learning courses by videoconference for residents at the Emergency Hospital Bucharest. Distance learning sessions not only save time and money in terms of travel and related expenses, but more importantly allow greater numbers of students to participate. According to the hospital's video communication coordinator, Dr. Marian Radu, the feedback from this project has been extremely positive. Dr. Marian has also taken advantage of the system by linking the hospital in IP videoconference with important national medical and IT meetings. During the videoconference, live images are sent directly from the operating theatre to the meeting room, where they are shown on a screen projector and handheld PC. “This experience has proved how much more effective pictures can be than words, especially live pictures”, said Dr. Marian. “Seeing images direct from the operating theatre had a very strong effect on the other members of the meeting, much more than if I had just shown them some slides for example. These demonstrations have also led to major companies, such as Microsoft Romania, Alcatel, IBM and HP making proposals to work with us on important future telemedicine projects”.

At least once every quarter, the Emergency Hospital uses video communication to hold remote meetings with other Romanian hospitals. Video communication sessions take place between the Emergency Hospital Bucharest, County Hospital Targu Mures, County Hospital Timisoara and other small medical units around the country. Up for discussion in these distance meetings are the most interesting patient cases, and the participants use this opportunity to share recent experiences. Meeting up in videoconference is much more convenient for all those involved. "Of course it saves money in terms of travel expenses but the most important factors for us are the more efficient use of time and more effective meetings dynamics", explains Dr. Marian. "Holding meetings in videoconference means all the participants are more focused, and thanks to document sharing applications the meetings do not loose any of their interactivity". Helicopter transport between Bucharest and Targu Mures are also organised by videoconference.

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