Evaluation within the users of a syndromic surveillance system in French Guiana

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OBJECTIVE

This paper describes an evaluation survey made within the users of a real time surveillance system in French Guiana.

BACKGROUND

The syndromic surveillance system "2SE FAG" has been installed within the French Armed Forces in French Guiana (3000 people) in October 2004 [1-2]. During the conception and the deployment of such a system, ergonomic issues were highlighted and training of stakeholders as well [3]. Daily exchanges with users have already permitted to enhance the system. An standardized and quantified evaluation among the users had to be done after 18 months of functioning. The objectives of this work were to evaluate the knowledge, the attitude and the practice of the stakeholders of the system.

METHODS

The survey was done between March and June 2006 with a standardized interview and a validated questionnaire for all voluntary users of the system in charge of the recording and the declaration of the epidemiological data. The survey's team moved all over the French Guiana to meet all the people involved in the system. The evaluation was about knowledge, attitude and practice for epidemiological surveillance in general, "2SE FAG" globally and its different functions (recording, declaration, feed-back, mailing), the software (recording and analysis), the hardware (PC, PDA, GPS) and the communication tools.

RESULTS

The main results showed that the users (military general practitioners and nurses) had a good level of knowledge of epidemiological surveillance in general and its stakes. They understood the importance of implementing some operational early warning system within the Armed Forces. The "2SE FAG" system was globally well known and the perception was quite positive. The international dimension of this program and all the work made with NATO partners represented some motivation factors. The system was useful or very useful for 67% of the people. The training was done in a normal way only for 57% of the people, the others had a shorter training (35%) or not training at all (8%) because of operational constraints. The mailing system was used by 100% of the users for surveillance issues but also for other topics. The practical aspects had a more pejorative evaluation, especially the developments made for the use of the tropicalized PDA. Those ones were considered as unsuitable for the missions in tropical deep forest, because of their weight and volume.

CONCLUSIONS

The "2SE FAG" system has to evolve to become more performing and more adapted to the users. The training has to be reinforced as well.

This evaluation has permitted to highlight the good and bad lessons from the first part of the development of this real time prototype within the French Armed Forces in French Guiana, before its generalization for all the French Armed Forces on duty areas.

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