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## ProMED-Mail and HealthMap: Information Communication Technology Partnership for Improved Emerging Animal Disease Reporting for English-Speaking Africa

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Under-reporting of emerging (animal) disease outbreaks is a common feature reported in many developing countries using the official International office for Epizootics (OIE) disease reporting format. This had led to calls for use of alternative unofficial disease notification and reporting sources to augment and improve the existing official disease reporting system. The development and use of Information Communication Technology ICT and its application to Veterinary medicine has provided opportunities for development of more reliable, effective and efficient emerging disease reporting, monitoring, surveillance, prevention and control. Two of such developed opportunities are the Programme for Emerging Diseases (ProMED) - mail (<http://promedmail.org>) and the HealthMap ([www.healthmap.org](http://www.healthmap.org)).

ProMED-mail is an internet-based reporting system dedicated to rapid global dissemination of information on outbreaks of infectious diseases and acute exposures to toxins that affect human health, including those in animals and in plants grown for food or animal feed. Electronic communications enable ProMED-mail to provide up-to-date and reliable news about threats to human, animal, and food plant health around the world, seven days a week. ProMED-mail is a program of the International Society for Infectious Diseases and currently reaches 53,000 subscribers in more than 185 countries.

HealthMap brings together disparate data sources to achieve a unified and comprehensive view of the current global state of infectious diseases and their effect on human and animal health. This freely available Web site integrates outbreak data of varying reliability, ranging from news sources (such as Google News) to curated personal accounts (such as ProMED) to validated official alerts (such as World Health Organization). Through an automated text processing system, the data is aggregated by disease and displayed by location for user-friendly access to the original alert.

ProMED-EAFR (<http://eaf.promedmail.org/>), is a sub-regional initiative focusing on emerging diseases in English-Speaking Africa that was developed collaboratively by ProMED-mail and HealthMap. The objective of this initiative is to increase access to information on the part of health care professionals from both the human and animal health sectors throughout English-speaking Africa. Subscription to ProMED-EAFR is free of charge on <http://www.isid.org/promedmail/subscribe.lasso> or through ProMED-EAFR - Subscription <http://promedmail.chip.org/mailman/listinfo/promed-eafr>

The development, use and application to Veterinary Medicine of Information Communication Technology ICT and Internet Web Communication Technology WCT has provided opportunities for development of more reliable, effective and efficient emerging disease reporting, monitoring, surveillance, prevention and control (Cowen *et al* 2004, Madoff L. C. and Woodall J. P. 2005, Jebra and Shimshony, 2006 and Babalobi O. O. (2010). Two of such developed opportunities are the Programme for Emerging Diseases (ProMED) - mail (<http://promedmail.org>) and the HealthMap ([www.healthmap.org](http://www.healthmap.org)).

ProMED-mail is an internet-based reporting system dedicated to the early detection and rapid global dissemination of information on outbreaks of infectious diseases and acute exposures to toxins around the world that affect human health, including those in animals and in plants grown for food or animal feed. ProMED reports on both plants and livestock animal diseases, human diseases, zoonotic diseases and diseases that affect sources of human nutrition. Electronic communications enable ProMED-mail to provide up-to-date and reliable news about threats to human, animal, and food plant health around the world, seven days a week. ProMED-mail currently reaches 53,000 subscribers in more than 185 countries and is a program of the International Society for Infectious Diseases ISID ([www.isid.org](http://www.isid.org)).



### HealthMap - Global Health, Local Information (<http://healthmap.org/en/>)

A Global disease alert mapping system, brings together disparate data sources to achieve a unified and comprehensive view of the current global state of infectious diseases and their effect on human and animal health. This freely available Web site integrates outbreak data of varying reliability, ranging from news sources (such as Google News, Moreover and Wildlife Disease Information Node) to curated personal accounts (such as ProMED) to validated official alerts (such as World Health Organization and Futosurveillance)

Through an automated text processing system, the data is aggregated by disease and displayed by location for user-friendly access to the original alert. HealthMap provides a jumping-off point for real-time information on emerging infectious diseases and has particular interest for public health officials and international travellers. Healthmap searches 20,000 websites every hour, tracking about 75 infectious diseases, including malaria, cholera, Ebola, and recently also swine flu. An average of 300 reports are collected each day, about 90% of which come from news media sources. HealthMap is a Google project, with map and satellite options, and has blog, facebook and twitter versions.

### ProMED-EAFR alerts on HealthMap (<http://healthmap.org/promed/>)

A website dedicated to the display of location reported by ProMED-mail, and is a classical example of partnership in the application of Information Communication Technology ICT and Internet Web Communication Technology WCT to improved emerging disease reporting ProMED-EAFR covering Anglophone English-Speaking Africa

### ProMED-EAFR: Anglophone Africa

ProMED-EAFR (<http://cafr.promedmail.org/>), is a sub-regional initiative focusing on emerging diseases in English-Speaking Africa that was developed collaboratively by ProMED-mail and HealthMap. The objective of this initiative is to increase access to information on the part of health care professionals from both the human and animal health sectors throughout English-speaking Africa. ”;

Subscription to ProMED-mail or any of the regional ProMED is free of charge on <http://www.isid.org/promedmail/subscribe.lasso>

Subscription to ProMED-EAFR can be done via <http://promedmail.chip.org/mailman/listinfo/promed-cafr>

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