



CASE STUDY SPAIN

A regional system trialling new approaches



Strengths

Recognised as a “fast tracker” country on eHealth in the European Union’s Digital Decade study, Spain provides an example of where national infrastructure has effectively linked data at the regional level. With each of the 17 autonomous communities responsible for health data, there is a lot of innovation with new approaches to infrastructure and patient-facing technology. Apps for patients are commonplace, enabling easy access to their records.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Health Record of the National Health System

Launched in July 2023 to provide a national solution for overcoming regional silos in data, the Health Record of the National Health System (HCDSNS) was introduced, enabling access to patients’ records across different autonomous communities, improving continuity of care and providing an example of how existing regional records can be connected at the point of the user. Patients can restrict access to parts of their record and see who has accessed their data.

Innovation and new initiatives

Due to the regional system and relatively little national guidance, autonomous communities are able to try new things on a smaller scale. For instance, the region of Catalonia is moving towards an open-platform EHR, and Spain is an early adopter of EU initiatives like cross-border ePrescriptions, the European Patient Summary and the EHDEN Project.



Challenges

- Due to the regional system, there are differences in health data maturity across the country, with some regions (particularly wealthier ones) providing better patient portals for patients and a more joined-up regional record compared to slower adopting regions.
- Different EHRs in place across providers (especially primary vs secondary care) and different coding systems create silos.
- Private providers do not share data with public electronic health records.



“Despite a relative lack of central coordination and regulation, the regions have innovated a lot and have put in a lot of effort to come up with different solutions and learn from one another, innovating in the region to fill the gaps of national regulation.”

SPANISH HEALTH DATA EXPERT