

ACT's MEDACTool excels in international conference test - ACT

Written by Colonel T L Rowland, GBR Army
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The Medical Branch of Allied Command Transformation is continuously working to improve delivery of medical care, and to share medical expertise across NATO and with the international medical community.

Its latest efforts have striven to increase dialogue among medical providers during complex emergencies and reconstruction and development efforts. A web-based Medical Assistance and Collaboration Tool (MEDACTool) has been designed to facilitate practical co-ordination and exchange of information. A test model was successfully demonstrated at the Swiss Medical Interoperability Conference, held in Bern on 7-10 May 2012.

Making the best use of medical resources in time of need ensures more people can benefit from the care available. That is the objective behind MEDACTool. It is able to match requests for assistance with offers of support in the area of crisis management. This can enhance situational awareness in the medical field and potentially avoid costly redundancies. MEDACTool is the only tool of its kind that contributes to get help to the point of need faster and benefits from collective clinical expertise.

At the Conference, highly experienced medical aid planners from the United Nations, World Health Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross and a number of actors from the commercial and military sector tested MEDACTool's ability to tackle a range of practical challenges set against an aid and reconstruction scenario.

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The outcome of the experiment was exceptionally positive, concluding that MEDACTool was intuitive and easy-to-use and offers an approach not seen before in the aid environment. Mr Coninx from the World Health Organization emphasized its potential value stating "MEDACTool could become the leader of the market". Many invaluable suggestions were gathered to make the tool even more effective in crisis situations. Apart from the technical side, a successful roll-out of the tool will depend on the trust and the will to cooperate and collaborate together across traditional lines between civilian, governmental/ non-governmental and military actors in an operation. Experimentation and collaboration events like the one in Bern are part of that process, helping overcome barriers and establish the links needed in time of crisis.