

Health care far from anywhere

Advances in web and satellite communications bring specialist medical expertise to the remote places where Shell works when it's most needed.

Shell employees and contractors work in some of the remotest places, taking great care to unlock energy the world needs. Keeping them safe and well is our top priority.



We go to some of the remotest places: inside an ice cave at Svalbard, Norway.

But what can we do when somebody falls ill in the Arctic or suffers an injury aboard a ship off the African coast?

Teams are on standby to transport sick or injured colleagues to hospital from Shell's platforms, vessels and remote bases anywhere on the planet within four hours. It can mean a long helicopter flight or turning a ship around.

Every minute counts in a medical emergency, and an accurate diagnosis is critical. Telemedicine technology is helping doctors to reach better decisions in remote places, using systems that provide access to a wide range of expert medical expertise at any time through internet and satellite connections.

There "in the room"

Doctors based on land receive images from the medical facility on board the Noble Globetrotter II deep-water drilling ship. Credit: Noble Drilling Services.

Telemedicine technology allows a doctor in the field to work with a hospital team hundreds, or thousands, of miles away in real-time. It can even connect with a surgeon who is at home, for example.

Doctors and specialists are connected in just ten minutes and use high-definition mobile cameras and smart tablets to be virtually “in the room”. Together, they perform examinations, diagnose conditions and take what may be life-saving decisions.



Doctors based on land receive images from the medical facility on board the Noble Globetrotter II deep-water drilling ship. Credit: Noble Drilling Services.

“Telemedicine allows us to diagnose patients more successfully, reducing the upheaval of medical evacuations by around 60%,” said Alistair Fraser, Shell’s Vice President for Health. “The technology has the potential to be used around the world.”

Saving lives

The Noble Globetrotter II deep-water drilling ship currently operates for Shell off the West African coast. It uses a telemedicine system to connect via satellite with any of 12 hospital departments at the University of Haukeland in Norway.

Doctors have used the technology together with medical equipment aboard the ship. Over a four-month period they saved two lives and also avoided three unnecessary evacuations.



The Noble Globetrotter II operates off the West African coast.

On land, in Nigeria, Shell Petroleum Development Company Ltd. is piloting an internet-based telemedicine system called VSee®. The technology is able to operate at low bandwidths, connecting employees working in remote rural locations - including swamp areas - to Shell medical specialists in Warri and Port Harcourt. By mid-2014, doctors had conducted more than 70 consultations via the web.

“The pilot programme has shown that VSee® improves the provision of medical consultations in remote regions where bandwidth is an issue,” said Dr. Babatunde Fakinle of Shell Health Nigeria.