

Press Release

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International Aerospace Medicine Days 2019

Thursday 3 October in Toulouse, CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall opened the International Aerospace Medicine Days (JIMAS) co-organized by the French armed forces medical office (SSA), the French Air Force, the MEDES space clinic and CNES. The event also provided the opportunity to mark the 30th anniversary of MEDES, which since its inception has worked to sustain and develop French expertise in space medicine and physiology, and to promote health applications of space research.

The session on 'Space for extramural hospital services' was one of the highlights of the event. During this session, Jean-Yves Le Gall detailed CNES's involvement with space medicine and the medical advances enabled by e-health, which covers all applications using digital technologies for health in the broad sense. These include telemedicine, which encompasses teleconsultations, tele-expertise, telemonitoring and medical teleassistance. E-health also includes secure management of medical data and smartphone apps, as well as scheduling and planning tasks like obtaining an appointment on line. All of these technologies make getting treatment easier and more efficient for patients, and enable them to continue living in their home for longer and to return sooner after hospital treatment.

One of the key requirements for making these technologies useable for all is a stable broadband Internet connection. Communications satellites can provide connectivity to all homes, medical practices and health institutions. Satellite communications can also fuel development of new services, like for example mobile consultations from a vehicle fitted out with medical equipment for visiting patients who live in remote regions or are unable to travel. Space is thus helping to develop and drive uptake of e-health solutions in France and around the world.

Astronauts are a perfect example of an isolated, sedentary patient living in a hostile environment and without easy access to a specialist doctor. Advances in e-health are extremely useful to ensure that astronauts stay healthy in space, and conversely the tools developed by space medicine find applications here on Earth.

To mark its 30th anniversary, the MEDES space clinic presented its three areas of activity, which are space medicine and physiology support for space exploration missions, clinical research and applications of satellite services and data in the health sector (e-health, epidemiology, etc.). Setting its sights resolutely on the future, MEDES continues to foster synergies between the health and space sectors. Its 30th anniversary celebrations also offered the opportunity to pay tribute to René Bost, the first director of the space clinic after whom it is now named.

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