

Case Study: Patient Power

Patient involvement is one of the most significant recent developments in the evolution of the electronic health record (EHR).

Thanks to major developments in new technology, thousands of patients can now read every detail of their medical notes, whether online or via special kiosks in the GP surgery.

Some forward-thinking practices have gone one step further and are now enabling patients with long-term conditions to monitor themselves and create data that will ultimately be captured within their EHR.

Others are using telehealth technology to enable patients to conduct standard medical checks in the waiting room ahead of their consultation – with the results posted automatically into the EHR.

The benefits of these approaches are numerous: engaging patients more actively in their own care by offering them access to information enables them to make more informed choices about their treatment.

Alongside condition monitoring, this improves self-care and captures a fuller and more accurate picture of a patient's medical history.

EMIS has been at the forefront of these new technologies, through a ground-breaking partnership with PAERS (Patient Access Electronic Record System).

Initially, this involved access via sophisticated touch-screen kiosks located in surgeries, but more recent developments have opened up internet access.

Increasing e-access for patients

Secure internet access to the EHR is being piloted by the Record Access Collaborative (RAC) – a group of practices, health professionals and patients dedicated to increasing patients access to their medical records.

More than 180 patients at a handful of EMIS surgeries can now access their full medical record, including test results, consultation and medication notes, via any internet-enabled PC with a web browser.

Currently, 30 practices have configured the software to activate the service, although all surgeries using EMIS LV or PCS have the software capability to offer medical record access.

Dr Amir Hannan, who has been leading the records access project in Hyde, urged other surgeries to take part.

He said: "For a number of years I have been giving patients copies of their medical records on disc to improve the relationship I have with them. Patients are keen to take ownership of their medical records, as they want to be more informed about their health."

Other innovative projects are being run by Marple Cottage surgery, Stockport, and The Red House Surgery, Hertfordshire, enabling patients to effectively add to their electronic healthcare record.

At Marple Cottage, an online system is currently being trialled with asthma patients, who can complete regular reviews of their condition from home.

Patients check their condition against a protocol online and, if necessary, complete and securely return a template assessment form using the EMIS Access system to the practice. This is reviewed by the asthma lead, who files it in the patient's record and creates a personalised self-management plan.

As well as providing a more convenient service to patients, the practice hopes that enabling people to monitor their own health will ultimately improve patient self-care and health awareness, and, in the long term, hopefully reduce emergency hospital admissions.

Johan Taylor, Practice Manager said: "Online reviews are particularly beneficial for patients who find it difficult to attend the surgery for their asthma reviews during working hours."

The Red House Surgery is using Telehealth Solutions' Surgery Pod to enable patients to record their weight, peak flow, temperature, pulse and blood pressure in the waiting room, prior to a GP consultation.

Fully interoperable with EMIS LV software, the Surgery Pod conducts standard medical tests and automatically posts data directly and securely into individual patient records without clinical supervision via a network connection.

The patient's data can be collected before the consultation and instantly displayed on the GP's screen, allowing patients to spend more quality time with their doctor as problems can be analysed rather than spending time on recording routine vital signs.

Dr Michael Ingram, GP at the surgery said: "General practice is changing with longer consultations, more complex problems and increasing expectations. This means that health prevention and routine checks are more difficult to fit in.

"This solution is ideal as efficiency is improved via automatic data collection and the patient is offered an active role in their own healthcare."

Links

www.paers.net

www.telehealthsolutions.co.uk

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LW4OcgVyB4w

