

Volume 15, 27 May 2015

Publisher: Uopen Journals

URL: <http://www.ijic.org>

Cite this as: Int J Integr Care 2015; Annual Conf Suppl; [URN:NBN:NL:UI:10-1-116994](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:nl:ui:10-1-116994)

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Conference Abstract

Integrating e-consultation in primary care

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Abstract

In the past years we noted a change in the vision of traditional face-to-face visits to telephone visits first then to an increased request for e-consultations. The easiness of accessibility to e-consultations as well as the optimization of the resources they offer, determined us to develop in our primary care center an online portal in order to meet patients demand for health care needs.

Our primary care center, located 20km south of Barcelona, serves of population of 28.000 inhabitants, of which 5.000 are children. Of the total registered population, we actually visit 63% of the adults and 67% of the children, the rest of population using private health care. For face-to-face consultations, we have two types of visits. Scheduled visits that can be booked at the front desk, by telephone or online and unscheduled visits meant for emergencies and booked at the front desk. We also offer telephone consultation for follow-ups and doubts about treatment or medication.

Our objectives of an online portal are to increase the accessibility to the public health care system, to attract new patients, to reduce the number of visits at the center, to facilitate communication with families or care givers of patients that can't come the center, and to simplify the interaction with the nursing homes in our area.

The portal was designed from scratch by a multi professional team formed by a doctor, a pediatrician, a nurse and a clerk together with a software developing company. There were held monthly meetings to remodel and adapt the program to our needs. The portal was tested for several months by two doctors and two nurses to catch possible glitches. When everything was up-to-date, we held meetings with the entire team to inform about the portal, its purpose and explain how it works. Recommendations were made on which patients to include in the program. The portal is a secure mean to connect via Internet the health care providers with patients. Information is given to the patients in a regular face-to-face visit and if they meet the minimum

requirements, they are enrolled in the system. We explain to them that it is not to be used for urgent care and it can be accessed from a desktop, a tablet or a mobile phone.

Full implementation of the program was in May 2014, and so far the team signed up 898 patients, with a total of 550 consultations (291 for GPs, 155 for pediatrics and 104 for nurses). A total number of 1311 messages were exchanged, with a mean of 2.38 messages per consultation. From our side, we use the portal to send blood test or imaging results, electronics prescriptions, and reports. The patients usually inquire about symptoms, treatments and medication.

The integrations of the e-consultation in our daily practice avoids unnecessary visits to the health center and saves time for both patient and health professionals. It can also connect the patients from any part of the world with their regular healthcare team.

Keywords

e-consultation; primary care; portal

PowerPoint presentation

<http://integratedcarefoundation.org/resource/icic15-presentations>