

# The WOW Consultation



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## Background

- Computers are common place in general practice. Studies show that the doctor-patient relationship changes as a result of the introduction of a computer – the third person – into the consultation.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Marie Curie Glasgow have implemented an Electronic Patient Records (EPR) and Patient Administration System (PAS), via EmisWeb, enabling the recording of real time patient data on the ward by means of Workstations – computers - on Wheels (WOWS) used at the bedside.

## Objectives

- To understand: 1) how health care professionals (HCPs) feel about using the WOW in a consultation; 2) their perception of how the patient and their family would feel; 3) how they think that the computer will affect the consultation; 4) the positives and negatives of using a computer with their patients.

## Methods

- HCPs from a variety of disciplines and services within the hospice were invited asked to complete a questionnaire based on the objectives above.

## Results

- 23 questionnaires were returned and all members of the MDT were represented across inpatients, outpatients and the community.

### Negative Themes:

- Barrier to Good Communication
  - Lack of eye contact
  - Loss of active listening
  - Body language/positioning altered
  - WOW intrusive
- Not Person-Centred
  - WOW point of focus
  - Patient depersonalised
- Personal Experience

### Positive Themes:

- Availability of Information
  - Real time data at your finger tips
  - Access to notes/letters/results
  - Access to records in the community
  - Legible documentation
- Improved Communication within MDT
- Information Governance
  - Secure personal records
- Patient Expectations

*“Patients often make comments about health professionals staring at a screen rather than focusing on them at outpatient appointment.”*

*“I would rather speak to a patient face to face without the computer. I think speaking to someone face to face and making good eye contact is important when communicating. It lets the patient see that you are listening and I think it helps relieve some of the anxiety the patient may be experiencing.”*

*“Assurance that everything is safely documented and the ability to look over previous documentation.”*

*“Easy access to information.”*

*“Communication between health care professionals”*

*“Patients are used to GPs and community nurses having IT access during consultations”*

## Conclusion

- Staff are apprehensive of using WOWs by the bedside, seeing it as a physical barrier to verbal and non-verbal communication
- Ultimately WOWs could impede the relationship between patient and HCP.
- Accessing real time patient information is a benefit, but not at the expense of the relationship with the patient.

## References

- 1 Pearce C. *et al.* The patient and the computer in the primary care consultation. *J Am Med Inform Assoc.* 2011 18(2):138-42  
2 Pearce C. *et al.* Doctor, patient and computer - a framework for the new consultation. *Int J Med Inform.* 2009 Jan;78(1):32-8