



Secure, fast photo capture for efficient, well-informed referrals

Case Study



The challenge

The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust needed to equip its clinicians within its busy emergency department (ED) with the ability to rapidly take secure photos of burns and minor injuries, add them to the patient record and share with colleagues as part of the patient referrals within and outside of the Trust, for example burns and plastic surgery units.

The existing method for the clinical team within the main ED and its minor injuries unit was to use the hospital's digital camera, kept under lock and key in the department, to take secure images but such devices require battery charging and the readiness of this at the point of use when needed is often lacking. The process to access the camera, transfer the images to a computer and upload to the hospital systems was time-consuming, adding to pressures on waiting time targets.

There were capacity challenges for the medical photography team to be able to take all the clinical photos needed as well as to have better out of hours support in place. The medical photography team could then focus on the more complex cases needing clinical image capture and the simpler cases could be accommodated directly by the ED or other teams.

To prevent clinicians from taking faster but unsecure images on their own devices, which didn't meet information governance and data protection standards, the Trust sought alternative options.

Solution

Bleepa® was identified as the application that best met the Trust's objectives for a fast, secure solution that captured patient consent, did not store images on any personal devices and complied with data protection standards. Another benefit of Bleepa was that usage could be restricted to only when the device is within the Trust grounds.

It also had the added benefit of facilitating communications within departments and across other specialties in the Trust to discuss patient cases and seek advice and guidance where needed.

Bleepa® connects with the hospital's PACS and EPR systems to automatically store the information as part of the patient record.

The emergency nurse practitioners within the minor injuries unit use Bleepa® to take the photos and record patient consent within the photo capture module. It is also used when needed by the paediatrics team for minor injuries and consent can be recorded by a parent or guardian.

The medical photography team put together online virtual training modules for Bleepa® users to advise on how best to take a clinical photo. The approach has been adopted for all clinical photography to ensure high-quality standards are continually met across the Trust.



“Bleepa works very well for us as a 24-hour service in our emergency department, to supplement our stretched medical photography team, and rapidly capture secure photos of patients with burns and minor injuries.”

“We can easily record patient consent when we take the image, add it to the patient record, and communicate with colleagues for efficient, well-informed burns, plastics and other specialty referrals. Any reduction in the time taken to review patients and help to improve their journey through the hospital is crucial when every second counts”

Justine Loh

Consultant in Emergency Medicine and Paediatric Emergency Medicine,
Digital Health Lead in ED



Conclusion

During the pilot phase of implementation, Bleepa®'s easy-to-use functionality has enabled the Trust to rapidly adopt its secure, photo capture features and add information to the patient record for more efficient, better-informed referrals.

The hospital uses the photos taken with Bleepa® to add to TRIPS (multi-site telemedicine referral system) for burns and plastics referral at different hospital sites – for example, Stoke Mandeville and John Radcliffe hospitals – to document the problem and enable review after the patient is transferred, or a few days down the line to visualise the burns or injuries. It also enables clinicians to refer back and review that information over time in the follow-up clinics.

Following the success of the pilot, the Trust is now moving into a wider implementation phase of the programme. It sees the value of Bleepa® for further use cases across the organisation, for example, to rapidly transfer the data from ECG machines directly into the PACS. Currently it's a manual process for the nurses to scan the data, save it, and transfer it into the EPR as the patients are processed. It also has plans for clinicians to use butterfly ultrasound probes on the same mobile devices so that the images, once captured, can be transferred via Bleepa® into the EPR.

Once the Trust has secured additional devices and rolled out its bring-your-own-device policy, Bleepa® will be used more widely across the Trust for more efficient, comprehensive referrals and clinical communication across its hospital sites.



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