

Teaching Tips

Volume 2 Issue 6 June 2011

Department of Family & Social Medicine Faculty Development E-Newsletter



Tips for Using the EMR in Patient-Centered Care

Despite certain limitations of electronic medical records (EMRs), they are clearly a part of family medicine's future. Below are some tips to **suggest to your students** for improving doctor-patient communication while using EMRs.

1. Be prepared before you enter the exam room

- *Look at the last note in the EMR.* Write down items you may need to ask the patient.
- *Input basic information* into the EMR before you enter.
- *Be patient-centered.* Think about how to balance your agenda with the patient's agenda.

2. Focus on communicating with your patients

- *Look at your patients.* Seems obvious, but it is easy to stare at the computer. The EMR is just a tool used to enhance our care for patients. Patients should always feel like (and be) the priority.
- *Tell your patients what you are doing as you are doing it.* Talk to your patients as you search for and enter data into the EMR.

3. Integrate technology into the visit

- *Use mobile computer monitors* and rearrange the monitor's position to interact more easily with patients.
- *Incorporate typing around your patients' needs.* If a patient is discussing a sensitive topic, don't type until the discussion is over.
- *Point to the screen.* This should be rare, but if necessary, point to key data on the screen so patients can follow the discussion.
- *Encourage patients' participation in building their charts.* Ask patients for permission to type while you talk or offer to show them what you are doing.



Effective health care is a partnership, in which both patients and physicians have a stake in trusting each other. A key part of that trust is effective communication.

- Jeffrey Segal

References / Resources:

- Ventres W. Kooienga S. Marlin R. (2006). EHRs in the exam room: tips on patient-centered care. *Family Practice Management*; 13(3): 45-47.
- Ventres W. Kooienga S. et al. (2006). Physicians, patients, and the electronic health record: an ethnographic analysis. *Annals of Family Medicine*. 4(2): 124-129.
- Hsu J. Huang J. Fung V et al. (2005). Health information technology and physician-patient interactions: Impact of computers on communication during outpatient primary care visits. *J. Am. Med Inform Assoc*. 12: 474-480.

Montefiore
THE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

EINSTEIN
Albert Einstein College of Medicine
OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Teaching Tips is a monthly e-newsletter for Faculty, Residents, and Community Preceptors sponsored by the DFSM Faculty Development Fellowship at Montefiore Medical Center. *Teaching Tips* will include practical teaching techniques for busy physicians who want to enhance teaching and learning at their clinical practices. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for future topics for *Teaching Tips* please contact Ellen Tattelman at etattelm@montefiore.org, Jennifer Purcell at jennifer.purcell@einstein.yu.edu or Stacia Maher at smaher@montefiore.org.