

Just a click away

CCMS system allows patients to access records, medical test results online

Sufian Suderman

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Imagine being able to keep track of your medical records, such as your blood pressure levels, via a laptop or PDA.

Such a scenario will soon become a reality with the introduction of an electronic health record and management system by the Singapore General Hospital (SGH) later this year. It will be accessible to all wards and SingHealth polyclinics.

The Community Care Management Solution (CCMS) had earlier been tested successfully under a pilot project conducted by the SGH, **SingTel** and HSAGlobal.

The pilot project, launched in November 2007, involved 200 diabetes patients across four inpatient wards, four specialist outpatient clinics, two SingHealth polyclinics and community care centres.

Apart from access to their medical records, the CCMS also allows patients to receive timely updates and results of their medical tests via an online portal that is free of charge.

The patient can also update his medical data, such as his weight and blood glucose levels, in the integrated system. This will enable healthcare providers to detect abnormal results early and take action, thus helping patients to avoid unnecessary readmission to the hospital.

Associate Professor Lim Swee Hia, Group Director of Nursing, SingHealth Services, said: "Presently, when they (patients) are discharged from the hospital and go to polyclinic or community care centres, we do not see the consistency of care.

"With this project, we can follow up whether patients have come back for their hospital or clinic visits."

"If they do not come back, we can follow up on them. With this system, we can know who consistently do not come back for check ups and we can call them to remind them about their check-ups."

An SGH spokesperson said there will be care coordinators to check the CCMS system every day and they will alert the doctors if a patient's condition deteriorates.

She added that the CCMS system will be compatible with the national electronic medical record that will be rolled out by the Health Ministry later.

Assoc Prof Lim said the system is robust enough to handle privacy and confidentiality issues. "For example, if the patients have access to the system ... they're only allowed to view certain information that's pertaining to themselves," he added.

Mr Law Meng Joo, 37 a diabetes and stroke patient who took part in the pilot project, said the CCMS helped him a lot.

“Caregivers can call me to remind me of my appointments. At home, I can upload my glucose levels and the doctor will know (my records) when I go for my appointment. The system is user-friendly and it helps me to tell the doctor about my condition beforehand. I can monitor my glucose level whether it goes up and down,” he told Today.