



Assembling Patient Data Electronically

The LHRI was one of three chosen sites for a pilot study involving a unique computer-based diabetes patient management system known as the Diabetes Electronic Management System (DEMS). The system was developed jointly under a global alliance between Novo Nordisk, a world leader in diabetes care, and the well-known and respected Mayo Clinic.

The system is designed for use by all members of the diabetes care team, including physicians, dietitians, educators and support staff, at the time of each patient's consultation. It is an easy-to-navigate, comprehensive system that enables patient data to be compiled in one electronic medical record, rather than multiple paper records. Having only one medical record improves communication significantly amongst all care team members, therefore reassuring the patient that their information is up-to-date, accurate and readily available.

SJHC's Beryl Schultz demonstrates the tremendous promise of DEMS software, the next generation of diabetes management tools. DEMS provides healthcare team members with an effective and practical method of integrating patient information directly into daily practices.

The individuality of each patient is not forgotten. The system has built-in mechanisms that provide suggestions for addressing clinical issues such as changes to treatment regimens or medication contraindications, that may be implemented or modified depending on the most appropriate course of treatment for each patient. Supporting the normal workflow of a diabetes consultation, a summary screen provides the physician with a clinical overview of the patient's current health status and medical history.

Patients like Marilyn Collier, who has been insulin-dependent for 48 years, benefit greatly from DEMS. Marilyn finds the data print-out helpful in reviewing her insulin levels and providing a concrete communications tool for her and her endocrinologist. Marilyn says, "it also keeps a record of the medications I am on, should I need to provide this information to another doctor or nurse." Marilyn lives with her diabetes every day, but hopes that some day, through research, a cure will be found.

Dr. Tom McDonald, Chair, Department of Medicine, Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism, The University of Western Ontario says, "DEMS enhances efficacy of a patient consultation and gives the patient immediate visual feedback on their progress. It also enables physicians to identify high-risk patients who can then be offered enrollment in appropriate targeted care programs."

DEMS holds tremendous promise as the next generation of diabetes management tools, and provides healthcare team members with an effective and practical method of integrating patient information directly into daily practices. For all individuals with diabetes, DEMS will facilitate a higher standard of care by providing a confidential, shared database of essential information.

Once again, the LHRI plays an instrumental role in the future of health care for our community and beyond.



Patient Marilyn Collier (top left) with members of the diabetes care team (clockwise) Dr. McDonald, Millie Litt, and Dr. Edmunds.