

KEY MESSAGES

The use of an electronic health record (EHR) in a maternity shared-care environment

November 2014

Glenda Hawley, Professor Claire Jackson, Professor Julie Hepworth, Dr Shelley Wilkinson

Policy context

For over 20 years, a maternity paper hand-held record (PHR) has been used to support the care of a woman during her pregnancy as she visits her community General Practitioner (GP) and hospital health care providers. In 2012, a maternity electronic health record (EHR) was developed as an alternative to the PHR and implemented at the Mater Mothers' hospital (MMH) in conjunction with GPs in a shared care setting. This report describes the study which determined best quality care in the two cohorts of women and their health care providers, answering three questions: 1. Completeness of recorded specific evidence based best practice variables, 2. Experiences of women and health providers when using an EHR and a PHR for perception, satisfaction and usability, 3. Integration of care for teamwork, clinical input and process deliverables?

Findings included:

- > The EHR demonstrated improved access and greater completeness of the collection of best practice maternity variables.
- > Women, hospital providers and GPs were familiar with and generally 'liked' the PHR, although sections of redundant information were identified.
- > Women, hospital providers and GPs were enthusiastic about the possibilities of using the EHR, but required orientation, education and ongoing support.
- > GPs had problems of access to EHR, but security was not identified as an issue.
- > EHR has not provided improved integration of maternity care, due to limited usage by women and health care providers and GPs.

Key messages

- > Using the EHR to provide a more complete set of clinical best practice variables, than the PHR can record manually.
- > Modification of the PHR to address issues of redundant or superfluous information.
- > Continued education and support programs for health care providers in terms of understanding the functionality of the shared-care EHR and data entry requirements and recruitment process of women.
- > Develop pathways to demonstrate and educate women and health care providers on shared viewing of EHR information from a woman's perspective.
- > Liaise with creators of the EHR software systems to modify the maternity EHR to enable improved access to and reliability with current GP systems.

The research reported in this paper is a project of the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute, which is supported by a grant from the Australian Government Department of Health under the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development Strategy. The information and opinions contained in it do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Australian Government Department of Health.