

Addressing Organizational and Communication Efficiencies in the Family Health Team with Online Collaboration Tools: A Case Study

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Identifying practical and effective strategies to address time management in communicating with colleagues is a major challenge within collaborative practice environments. Consequently it is necessary to explore and discover new and efficient ways to communicate and consult with other professionals within such settings as the family health team. The primary aims of the Secure Patient Information Exchange (SPIE) project were to investigate how clinicians communicate and collaborate in an interprofessional environment, and to determine the factors that facilitate or obstruct communication among family health team members and external agencies. Initial project evaluation findings identified that a major challenge was the time that team members invested in contacting physicians both during regular office and after hours. Other factors contributing to the time inefficiencies were primarily due to three elements, namely: members in the FHT vary on the extent of time spent with each patient in the clinic, team members working part time, and team members with significant time for other teaching and administrative commitments. These challenges and issues were addressed with creative strategies such as the implementation of online collaboration tools. Second phase of the project revealed positive satisfaction rankings by FHT members with the implementation of an online group calendar, containing accurate and up-to-date information on work, call and vacation schedules. This poster presentation will provide an overview of the process, enablers, barriers, implementation, and evaluation of the SPIE initiative addressing improved and efficiencies of communication through implementation of technological tools.