Successes and Failures in Telehealth 2017

Road Deaths Relating to the Attendance of Medical Appointments in Queensland
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Patient Safety Concerns
• Lack of patient and/or staff knowledge
• Technology issues
• Changes to staff workload
• Accessibility issues
• Lack of guidelines
• Patient anxiety
• Poor system integration


Review of NCIS
• Keyword search “appointment/s”, “discharge/d”, “admission/admitted”
• The victim lived in Queensland
• The victim died on Queensland roads
• The report definitely states that the individual was travelling directly to or from receiving medical treatment when the incident occurred.
• For each included record, details captured included primary residential address, location of road incident, whether a passenger was present, whether the occupant(s) was travelling to or from their appointment, age and gender.

Results
45 individuals were killed on Queensland’s roads between 2002 – 2015 as a result of travelling to or from a medical appointment.
Average of 3.21 fatalities per year.

Analysis
Average age: 57.8 years
Age range: 9 – 97 years
Gender: 25 males / 20 females
Travelling to appointment: 21
Travelling from appointment: 19

Comments from Coroner and Police Reports
“accident consistent with driver falling asleep”
“fatigue suspected”

“adverse weather contributed”
“rainy conditions”

driver was “hurrying to keep an appointment”
“forgets he was running late for an appointment”

driver had self-discharged from hospital, “appears to have blacked out before striking pedestrians”

“driver had indicated that he was running late for an appointment”
Discussion

- This exercise was purely philosophical – there is no suggestion that any of these accidents could have been avoided.
- Many of these accidents would have been the result of necessary and unavoidable travel (i.e. procedures, clinical measurements etc).
- The exercise simply demonstrates that road travel presents risks. Reducing road travel reduces risk.
- If a telehealth alternative exists, is requiring a patient to travel unnecessarily at odds with the duty of care required by all health providers?
- Would a clinical procedure that caused over three deaths in the Queensland population each year be cause for concern?

50 years of telehealth research


Logan Airport Clinic Telediagnostic Model

Logan Airport Clinic Telediagnostic Model cont.

Conclusion

Conclusions

In a setting such as herein described, telediagnosis is feasible. A telecommunications system with a professional nurse serving as a clinician can be used to increase the availability of medical care. The technology required is currently available. This kind of system can help bring special knowledge and skills to remote as well as less remote but medically disadvantaged areas. The challenge to those interested in patient care is to find ways to translate the feasible into the real.

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