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As technology continues to progress, healthcare organizations and professionals can gather and interpret data more efficiently when it comes to patient care. Nursing informatics can be defined as a combination of computer science, information science, and nursing science designed to assist in the management and processing of nursing data, information, and knowledge to support the practice of nursing and the delivery of nursing care (Staggers & Thompson, 2002).

Although the paper medical record is a thing of the past, at my Psychiatric facility we heavily rely on a paper system. We recently implemented an eMRs system as part of the first phase in the transition to electronic records. This system is used for medication orders and discharge documentation. Prior to this system, the provider would access the chart, review medication, adjust orders manually and the medication nurse will fax an order over to the pharmacy, get written patient consent, and the pharmacy will verify and fill the pyxis with the medication. If the pharmacy could not understand the physician’s handwriting, the pharmacist would call the nurse on the unit to advise of the need to clarify medication orders. The medication or desk nurse would then send out a Tiger text to the provider for clarification. Once a response is confirmed, the pharmacy will then be notified. This process involved numerous people and can take up to several hours for clarification and completion of the task, while the patient is awaiting their med adjustment. With the new eMRs system, processing medication orders entered in the eMRs system by the provider takes less than sixty seconds to go through the pharmacy database. Once the order is reviewed and confirmed by the Pharmacist, nursing is able to verify and confirm the order by a click of a button, get written consent from the patient, and dispense the medication. This new process can take about 15 minutes on average as long as the order is reasonable. If there is a clarification needed pharmacy will contact the provider directly in most cases and get a quick response using this new system via e-mail or internal text that is linked to the eMRs. My past experience with EHRs, such as Cerner and Epic, does not allow for providers to finalize an order unless the order set is filled out correctly. In some facilities I have worked at, medication clarification resolution can be managed directly between the pharmacist and the physician entering the orders. In 2017, approximately 87 percent of providers used some form of an eMRs and that number is projected to improve going forward (Heier, 2019). The medication ordering process is perhaps the best example I can think of how nursing informatics has shaped our careers, improved the way we care for the patient, and strengthen patient safety. This is a great example of how nursing informatics and the use of eMRs have enabled the job of the physician, pharmacist, and the nursing discipline.

Informatics and technologies have proven to positively influence our professional interactions with physicians or other healthcare team members. Nurse informaticians can rapidly use data from the eMRs system for wisdom development and assist in knowledge progression (Nelson & Parker, 20). Even with such advancement in technology and the continued integration and development of nursing informatics, a study found “nurses have consistently reported that e-documentation is a concern with the introduction of eMRs. As a result, many nurses use handwritten notes in order to avoid using EHRs to access information about patients” (Sarkhel, et al., 2018). This has been a struggle for our unit and I believe this process is a simple fix. Offering mandatory training and perhaps having an onsite IT liaison as a point of contact after the implementation would allow nurses to gain confidence in the new system instead of a binder reference. Often nurses are afraid of “making a mistake” or are resistant to change, therefore the persistence of handwritten notes continues to be problematic at times for patient care. Technology in nursing has come a long way in the last few decades and I am looking forward to seeing what the next decade will be when it comes to accessing information, science, and the profession as a whole. As nurses, I believe we need to recognize and embrace this evolution.

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