GETTING RUNS ON THE SCOREBOARD – development of a formal health informatics curriculum statement for the RACGP

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Background:

• The RACGP is the college responsible for setting standards in general practice in the Australian setting. Health informatics now plays an important role in the working life of a GP, however until 2007; no formal health informatics statement was available for learners and educators.
• Increase uptake in computers and software
• Increase usage of the internet for medical information
• Britt – high penetrance but limited higher-level uptake; also training lacking in appropriate usage
• No health informatics curriculum present – considered sub-section of practice management
Aim:

• To describe the development of the first stand alone health informatics curriculum statement for an Australian specialty college
Method:

- Qualitative descriptive commentary (reported by working group members) on the pre-development and development stages
- Working group members included academic staff, medical practitioners, medical student and community representatives.
Results:

• Statement now officially launched
• A number of positive and negative issues arose from the development of this resource
• Issues include – geopolitical barriers, successful application of HI to the lifecycle of learning, and bench marking with other organisations
Geopolitical:

- Senior executive were unwilling to consider health informatics as a stand alone entity; two years of lobbying.
- Argument made that HI involves not only the EHR but also telehealth, EBM internet searches & the role of EDSS.
- Final argument - importance that a learning framework be created.
Application to lifecycle of learning

• Successful creation of statement in direct reference to lifecycle of learning – medical student to specialist GP and also direct reference to 5 domains of general practice
Benchmarking

- Other colleges – no stand alone HI statement
- Australian Curriculum Framework for Junior Doctors – inferred but not highlighted as a key learning area
- Medical School – no direct linkage, HI taught but with randomly through the course. No direct assessment of skills, although elements of summative assessment
Further comments

• Written over 3 months
• Health informatics - general acceptance by doctors and community as an important pillar for general practice
• Learning objectives and suggested learning platforms also written and approved by Council – task was made easier with HI statement
Conclusion:

- Statement now available from the RACGP website
- Only statement of its type in Australia
- Two areas requiring further thought - training engagement & assessment of skills
• Future doctors with HI skills can improve the delivery of clinical care
• The RACGP curriculum statement is a first step in the right direction