

# What's next



## Healthcare

# Digital Pathology reporting: Putting patients at the centre of care

A few years back, the Cellular Pathology Department at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, headed up by Dr. Dean Harmse, was facing a big challenge. Struggling to meet the national RCPATH Turnaround Time (TATs) standards for cancer reporting, changes to the workflow were trialled by Dr Harmse, with the help of two Biomedical Scientists in the laboratory, and then implemented in the Department. These changes transformed the working practices of the department, improved patient care, and rapidly took the unit from failing, to award winning status in 6 months.

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The EHR will have a profound impact on [the quality and safety of patient care](#), which remains the focus of all healthcare providers. However, the deployment process is also arguably one of the most ambitious projects that the NHS has ever seen, with the goal of this technology being used by all staff groups, be they medical, nursing, allied health professionals, or support services. In order for this undertaking to be successful and patient information contained in the EHR to be up to date and relevant, all staff groups may be required to input information in real time and in electronic format into the system.

## Clinicians' preference for entering clinical information

Manual entry of data via a keyboard is of course an option; that said, realistically-speaking, very few health care professionals have adequate typing skills, this will have efficiency and cost implications when they're inputting data. There is the traditional method of dictation of patient notes with subsequent transcription services, however this will be too slow and cumbersome to meet the requirements of real time input.

Compounding this problem, is that fact that it is hard it is to capture unstructured data in the EHR's dropdown menus and check boxes. Given these barriers, there may well be a tendency to truncate or limit the amount of patient information provided due to the immense time pressure there is on all staff groups working in the NHS – and this will be detrimental to patient care.

## The route to better patient outcomes

[Speech recognition software](#) offers an alternative to the typing of [medical notes](#). Its dynamic, flexible nature and ability to capture a clinicians' thoughts and notes in real-time, makes speech recognition technology an ideal interface to use with the EHR.

There's much evidence within healthcare to show that speech recognition enables the speedy production of [high-quality and detailed patient notes and records](#). It also allows health care professionals to generate patient records, reports and referral letters whilst the patient is still present in the consulting room, if required. This is promoting a much-needed culture of openness, as patients can be completely aware of the information contained within their own medical records.

Long term, there can be little doubt that ultimately the use of speech will increase patient satisfaction and reduce complaints resulting from communication breakdowns between healthcare professionals and the patients they treat.

**Tags:** [healthcare industry](#)

## More Information



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