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Meet the NHS GP saving an hour a day—and increasing patient safety—with Dragon Medical One

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17 August 2022



AI-powered documentation companions like Dragon Medical One can save clinicians a lot of time—but the benefits go way beyond time savings. We spoke to Dr Barry Sullman, GP at Balaam Street Surgery and Clinical Lead Prescribing at Newham CCG, to get his insights into how Dragon Medical One helps him save time, increase documentation quality, and improve patient safety.

In our recent webinar, we looked at how Dragon Medical One, our conversational AI workflow assistant and documentation companion, uses advanced medical speech recognition to reduce the clinical documentation burden.

During the webinar, I had a fascinating conversation with Dr Barry Sullman, GP at Balaam Street Surgery and Clinical Lead Prescribing at Newham CCG. Dr Sullman has been using Dragon for many years. He described how he now takes advantage of the cloud-based flexibility of Dragon Medical One to use it in various clinical settings, including consulting rooms, out-of-hours centres, and even a noisy casualty department. "The beauty of the current iteration of the software is that whatever enhancements I make at one workstation become immediately available to me anywhere else I work," he told me.

Saving time on clinical documentation

By using his voice to dictate documentation directly into the EPR, Dr Sullman saves a significant amount of time during his working day. “When I use Dragon for the whole day, I can typically save an hour,” he explained. “That’s simply because it is faster to speak than to type. However, it’s also important to point out that I am a touch typist with a speed of about 60 words per minute. For people with slower typing, the time savings will be substantially greater.”

The time saved gives Dr Sullman the opportunity to reflect on his learning and leaves him feeling less fatigued. But while there’s no doubt that these time savings are invaluable, Dr Sullman also spoke about some benefits of Dragon Medical One that he feels are even more important.

So much more than just time savings

Many GPs’ communications with patients now take the form of text messages and emails, rather than phone calls, so medical speech recognition offers enormous value.

“With voice recognition, it’s possible to create much more detailed, robust, well-constructed, and fully safety-netted messages—simply because you have more time to do it,” said Dr Sullman. “With typing, you have less time to create these messages, and you get fatigued. With talking, you can say a huge message in just a few moments.”

Documenting that safety-netting is vital because otherwise, as Dr Sullman pointed out, from a medicolegal point of view, it never happened. “I have been in that situation in the Coroner’s Court when, because something wasn’t documented, it was deemed that it didn’t occur, when in fact it had occurred, but I just hadn’t documented it.”

When I asked Dr Sullman to describe Dragon Medical One in one word, his answer was instant: Safety. “This software allows me to put down all my thoughts in their entirety; everything in my head goes into the record,” he explained. “It allows me to document my joint decision-making process completely. It allows me to clearly record safety-netting, both in the clinical notes and the messages sent to patients.”

Improving patient safety

One way that Dr Sullman helps to ensure patient safety is by using AutoText templates in Dragon Medical One. He’s created templates for baby, paediatric, and adult patients to ensure each consultation has a logical structure and nothing gets missed.

“I just say, ‘Paediatric template,’ and a complete consultation is created,” he said. “That’s a readymade structure forming a checklist that ensures the paediatric examination is complete and I haven’t forgotten anything. It provides safety because everything has been covered, and ensures a consistently high standard of consultation across the whole organisation. And by making my life easier, I’m less tired, and that’s a hidden benefit. All of these things add up to safety for patients and safety for doctors.”

Dr Sullman also told me that using his voice gives him more ‘thinking time’; instead of focusing on typing, he can keep his attention on considering his diagnosis and the best form of management, further increasing patient safety.

Ending clinicians’ keyboard addiction

Dr Sullman is convinced that using Dragon Medical One can help cure clinicians of their addiction to using keyboards. While he still has a keyboard on his desk, he keeps it out of reach to encourage himself to use voice as much as possible.

“Sometimes, when I haven’t started Dragon and I begin work without it, I feel irritated. Using the keyboard has started to become a nuisance that holds me back—I like the freedom of speech,” he said. “This may sound strange, but at times I feel like I’m talking to my computer, like you see in Star Trek. And the reason for that is that I’ve programmed in so many unique phrases, AutoTexts, and commands that it’s become a servant of my voice; it does everything I want it to do.”

See Dragon Medical One in action

It was great to hear about Dr Sullman’s experiences of making the most of all the powerful functionality in Dragon Medical One. And the webinar also featured a demo from Nuance Elite Partner Crescendo, revealing exactly how Dragon Medical One supports GPs’ daily workflows and takes the hassle out of clinical documentation. Watch the webinar on demand to see the demo and hear all of Dr Sullman’s

insights.

Tags: Digitisation of the NHS

More Information

Watch the webinar

Hear Dr Sullman's experiences and insights, and see Dragon Medical One in action.

Learn more



About Dr. Simon Wallace

Dr. Simon Wallace is the Chief Clinical Information Officer (CCIO) of Nuance's Healthcare division in the UK and Ireland. Simon has worked as a GP, hospital and public health doctor in Brighton and London. His interest in health informatics began in the 90s when he spent a year at the King's Fund investigating the impact of the internet on shared decision making between patients and their healthcare professional. For the past 15 years, he has worked for a range of organisations including Bupa, Dr Foster, Cerner Corporation and GSK across a range of technologies which include electronic patient records, telemedicine, mobile health and lifestyle devices. Simon has a keen interest in the voluntary sector, recently completing a 7 year term as a Trustee for Fitzrovia Youth in Action, a children and young people's charity based in London.

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