



Teaching Old Dogs

New Tricks

Presenter:

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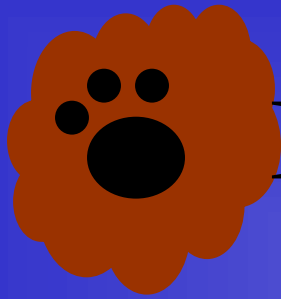


Murray-Plains Division of General Practice

Slide 1

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Murray-Plains Division of General Practice

- Situated in Northern Victoria/Southern New South Wales
- Covers 22,000 square kms
- 20 Practices
- approx. 55 GPs

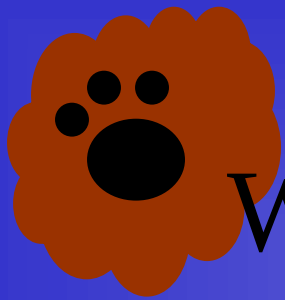


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Where have we come from?

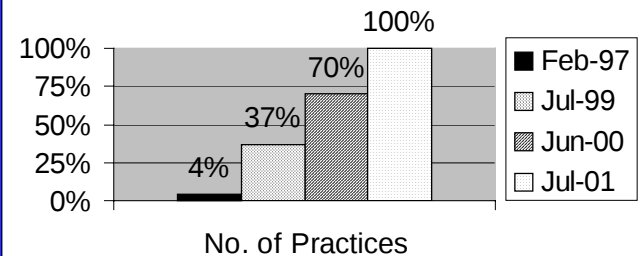
“the 4% of GPs using computers for prescription writing, medication management or recall lists was well short of the Commonwealth published aim to have computers on 50%

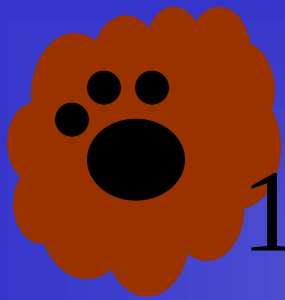
of GPs’ desks by 1998

and 90% by 2001!”

Di Kilsby 1997

Electronic Prescribing in MPDGP Practices

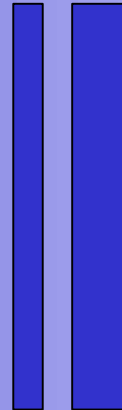




1998 – momentum gathers!

- Practice Incentive Program encourages the purchase of a server and extra computers which pave the way for electronic explosion!
- A modem is installed to open the window to the outside world!

*“Equipment is in place,
but how do we use it?”*





1999 – Look out Y2K!

- Isolated rural practice, no local support available for training and advice.



Dear Sir
re : **Millennium Bug - Y2K**
problem
In line with our Quality Assurance policy, our organisation is preparing for the year 2000 by identifying any equipment which may not be Y2K compliant...





Finding an “expert”

Following discussions with other Divisions, an IT guru was contracted to assist Practices to uptake computerisation. More than 50% of the Division’s Practices were visited by the Division IT Officer and 2 IT

“experts” (no written reports were ever received!)





Lessons to be learned..

- When engaging contractors, always ensure clear documentation of outcomes, timelines & cost is obtained PRIOR to commencement.
- Even if peers recommend a contractor, it is not a guarantee of reliability in rural areas!





So, now what?

Aim developed by Practice Support Team:

“We will empower GPs & staff by providing relevant, timely information to further develop Practice knowledge in such a way that it promotes ownership by the Practice which ultimately leads to increased quality in practice.”





2000 – “Lifting the bar”

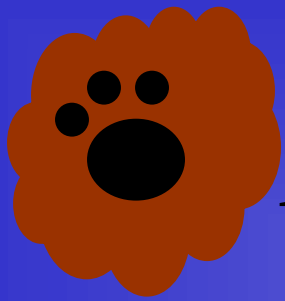
With Division IT Officer assistance, a Patient Health Summary sheet is introduced to aid the Practices to ensure good electronic health records are developed.

Patients told,
“Help us to help you.”

A screenshot of a patient health summary form for Jennifer Andrews. The form includes fields for Name, DOB (20/04/1970), Address (2 Kennedy Rd, Deno Town, 4523), and Phone (9123 4567). It also lists Allergies (BEE STINGS) and Warnings. Below these are tabs for Summary, Current Rx, Progress, Past history, and Referrals. A table shows medical history from 1996 to 2000.

Year	Date	Condition
1996	27/02/96	ACNE VULGARIS
1999	30/11/1999	HAEDEMESES
2000	13/02/2000	ASTHMA - ALLERGY INDUCED





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Anske Robinson “Information technology creeps into rural general practice”

“GPs with good support staff are better able to take advantage of technology than GPs with little or inadequate support.”

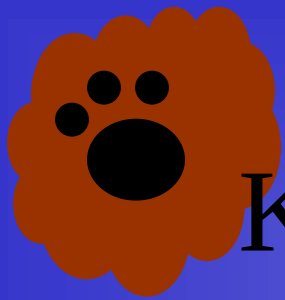


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Slide 10

August 2003





Key Practice Staff Network

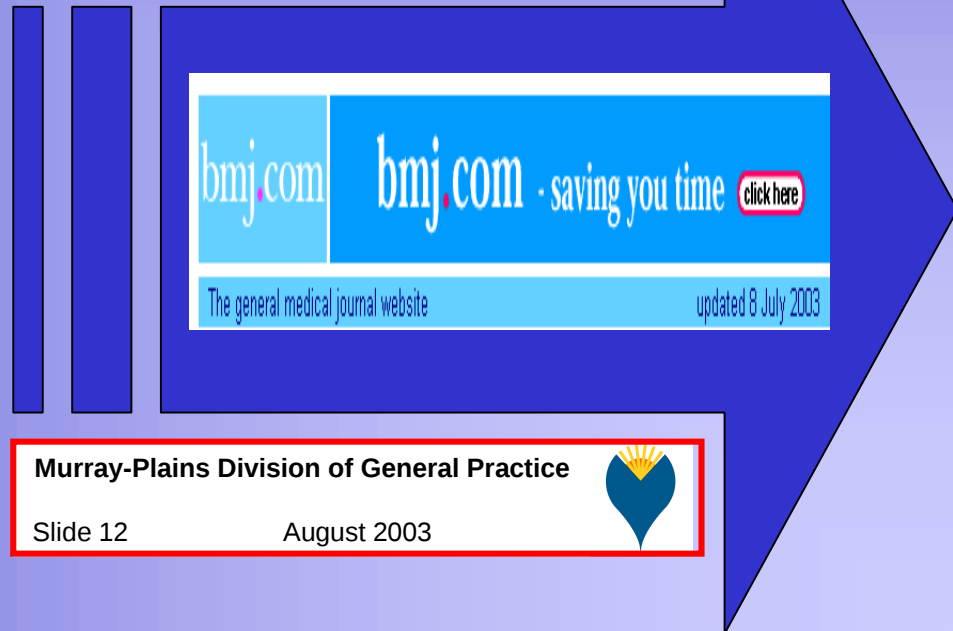
Linkages made with other practices in the region through KPSN meetings & annual weekends (since 2000) are beneficial as staff share advice and ideas about software, hardware & other practice issues.





Evidence of benefits..

- Many research papers are available documenting benefits of computerisation.
- Recently, 28th June, 2003 British Medical Journal published “The electronic record in primary care – regression or progression?”





BMJ 2003:326 (28 June)

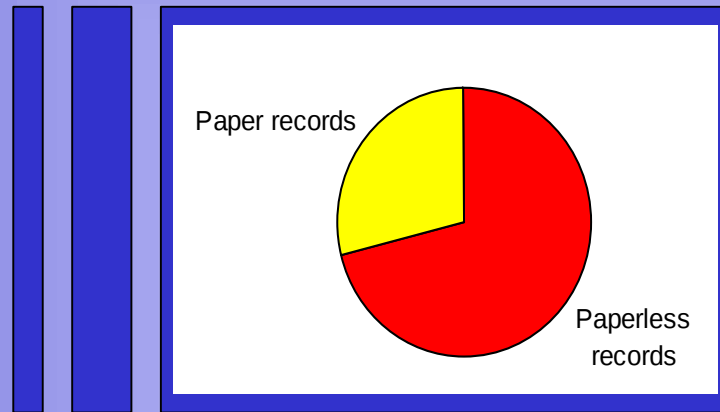
- Electronic medical records are more complete & understandable than paper records.
- Cross sectional study of 529 records in 25 practices
- 89% paperless records & 70% paper records medically understandable

A screenshot of a web-based form titled "Cardiovascular risk". The form contains several input fields: "Date" (09/07/2003), "Demographics" (D.O.B. 23/06/1940, Sex F), "Blood Pressure" (Systolic 120, Diastolic 80), "Cigarettes/day" (25), and "Total Cholesterol (mmol/l)" (7.9). On the right side of the form, there are buttons for "Calculate", "Save", "View", "Print", "Detail", and "Close". The form is displayed within a blue arrow-shaped frame pointing to the right.



Diagnosis recorded

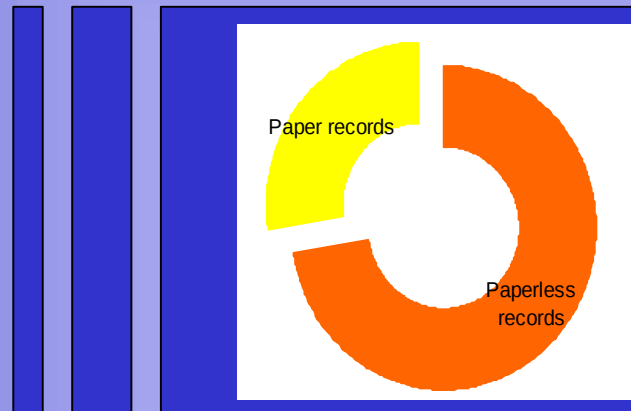
Almost 90% paperless records had at least one diagnosis recorded compared with 32% of paper based records.





Drug dose reporting

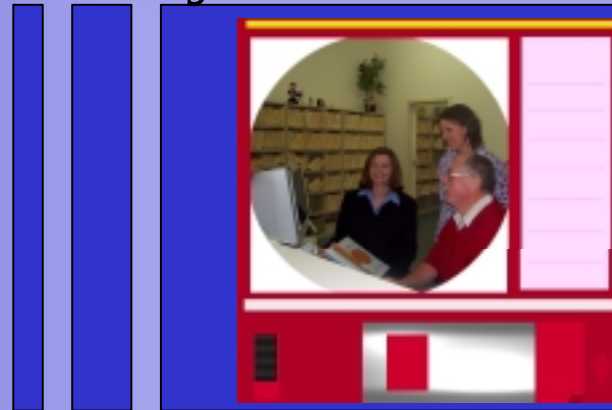
87% in electronic records compared to
33% in paper records





Downside?

- Some difficulties accessing timely technical support (which can be located over an hour's drive away)
- Typing speed is particularly an issue for older GPs
- Staff not keen to embrace change can restrict progress.





Solutions to staff reluctance

- Important when employing staff (including GPs) to ensure they understand Practice protocols around electronic systems and are prepared to embrace them.
- Employment Agreements should include commitment to upskilling and adoption of Practice systems.





Secrets of success..

- Willingness to embrace change
- Everyone in the Practice **MUST BE** enthusiastic and support it – most software packages continue to evolve and each update requires upskilling!





- Vital to have a “driver”, a cheque book and a team approach.
- Road to success has been made smoother by Division support (continued one-to-one visits, Quarterly Information Management Sessions, Key Practice Staff Meetings)





Questions?

