

# Insights into EHR and Sub-Specialty Disease Management

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Electronic Health Records Software

## Second in a Four-Part Case Study Series

### How Electronic Health Records Aides in Tracking and Managing Cataract Patients

By Alan Faulkner, MD

#### Patient History

*A 51-year-old female who underwent cataract surgery with the implantation of a premium multifocal lens. When refractive stability has been achieved she will likely undergo enhancement with photorefractive keratectomy.*

This patient originally visited my office in 2003 inquiring about LASIK surgery for her myopia. At the time, her corneas were too thin for her to undergo this treatment. In 2005 she became eligible for LASIK surgery and had great results. In 2008 I noticed some decrease in her distance acuity. In 2009 a further myopic shift was noted along with development of nuclear sclerotic cataracts in both eyes. In 2010 she underwent a successful cataract surgery. Throughout the course of her treatment, EHR has enabled me to quickly track and review all of her data, aiding me in identifying new technologies that she may benefit from using.

#### Managing Critical Tasks

With my EHR software, maximEyes, I have designed a custom treatment form that helps me monitor changes in patients. I can also use this form in the laser suite. With this particular patient, I was able to track the progression of her myopia from visit to visit by scrolling between her exam screens. A suspicion of crystalline lens change was noted well before it was readily apparent at examination.

This patient had a large refractive error corrected by LASIK. The calculation for the intraocular lens power is extremely difficult and often is done by numerous methods. In this case, EHR allowed all of her pre-operative and post-operative keratometry, refractions and laser treatment parameters to be easily found and used for calculation and lens selection purposes.

#### Reduced Chair Time

EHR provides a template for the entry of exam data, helping to assure that all infor-

mation is recorded to support the diagnosis. Data can then be brought forward at each subsequent exam and only modified when needed.

This patient needed to discontinue use of her RPG lenses and achieve refractive stability before surgery could occur. With EHR I was able to find her refractive data quickly by scrolling between her exams. It made the chair time associated with this process very efficient, compared to flipping through multiple pages of paper charts where refraction information may not be recorded in a consistent place or manner.

#### After the Exam

Once I finish an exam, it is simple to code the visit and determine a return date for the patient. As the patient leaves, the front desk can make the appropriate collection and schedule the next appointment, or the EHR software generates a reminder card.

Once the data is transferred from the exam, it is then available to anyone else who may need information about this patient, such as a billing person or surgery coordinator. In the process of going to surgery there are often numerous issues that come up from the patient, surgery center, insurance company and referring physician. These can be handled by anyone with access to a computer terminal. This saves countless man-hours and frustration caused by searching for patient charts.

#### Benefits of ePrescribing

EPrescribing allows techs to send orders for any surgical medications directly to the pharmacy. EPrescribing alerts us to allergies that patients sometimes forget to tell us about. It also allows us to prescribe formula and less expensive regimens that vary greatly between insurance carriers and are impossible to keep up with manually.

#### Pre- and Post-Operative Counseling

With my EHR software, I created informed consent templates that are linked to diagnosis codes that cover what I always tell patients in pre-operative counseling. This

saves me a lot of time and provides excellent documentation, medically and legally, of the physician-patient discussion about the risks and benefits of a procedure.

After a cataract patient has surgery, my EHR software generates post-op instructions and diagnosis specific counseling templates. These have advantages over written instructions because the templates can be modified and easily adjusted. A key feature is that they can be printed in large fonts for patients with very poor vision.

#### Efficient Paperless Office

EHR automates a number of tasks that save time and money in my practice. Tracking patient information is easier, coding and collection is more efficient, and we can deal with surgery issues quickly. Our new robust image management system will practically eliminate the need to print and scan, and it will quickly transfer data to an electronic patient record. Our cataract patients, and all of our patients, greatly benefit from our use of EHR. ■



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