

# Accuracy & completeness of clinical documentation within NHS Trusts

Understand the impact on patient experience, doctors' and nurses' ability to care and on the economics of a Trust

Specialist research and management consultancy company, Ignetica has been commissioned by Nuance Communications Ltd. to carry out research into the Clinical Documentation Challenge within NHS England Secondary Care Trusts.

Peter Booth, MD Ignetica, explains some of the background to and early findings from the research and shares his thoughts about the potential value of the research ahead of its publication in May 2015.

# The Clinical Documentation Challenge

## What is 'The Clinical Documentation Challenge Research'?

It is original UK research commissioned by Nuance into the accuracy and completeness of clinical documentation within NHS Trusts in order to understand its impact on patient care pathways, clinical documentation processes and associated economics of a Health Trust.

## Why do you think it is important?

Currently there are huge investments being made across UK healthcare in technology and processes to support the achievement of a number of government initiatives including:

- In January 2013, the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt set out his challenge for the NHS to go 'paperless by 2018' with the twin aims of reducing healthcare delivery costs and improving patient care
- NHS England has made extra funds available to Trusts through its Technology Fund Awards for projects that support the development of an 'integrated digital care record'.
- In October 2014 Simon Stevens CEO of NHS England published NHS England's Five Year Forward View which also captures this vision by setting out the sector-wide approach that is being driven by the National Information Board (NIB).
- The NIB is set to publish a set of road maps setting out next steps in digital care to achieve the goal that 'All patient and care records will be digital, real-time and interoperable by 2020'.

## What is the scope of your research?

We've been commissioned by Nuance Healthcare Division to carry out

- Comprehensive mapping and analysis of flow of clinical information across typical Trust patient care pathways
- Identify amongst these pathways areas that are potentially most sensitive to clinical document accuracy and completeness
- Quantify impact of clinical documentation in these areas on patient care, doctor and nurse efficiency and Trust economics

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- The accuracy and completeness of clinical documentation would seem to be essential ingredients for the achievement of **integrated, effective, efficient and safe delivery of care.**

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- However, there's currently no research relevant for the UK healthcare environment that **quantifies the impact of clinical documentation on patient care, doctor and nurse efficiency or Trust economics.**

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#### How are you going about doing the research?

- We're interviewing CCIOs from a number of Trusts
- Then following this up with interviews with Clinical leads drilling down into areas that would appear to be the most sensitive to accuracy and completeness e.g. discharge & transfer notes and letters, progress and nursing notes, outpatient and clinic notes
- We're following this up with a wider web-based survey to a larger group of clinician stakeholders for a broader statistical base to complement the deep-dive interviews
- This will culminate in a report addressing the 'Business Value' of Clinical Documentation in the Trust setting.

"As we get into the interviews we realise there are high levels of interest in what might seem a pretty 'dry' area of research. We're really heartened by that fact that in the Trusts we've interviewed the CCIOs, CIOs and Clinicians recognise this area as very important to get right. **It's an important element in their day to day work toward improving quality and outcomes in patient care and efficiencies in the delivery of care and services. They're welcoming a more empirical approach that will provide some data points for establishing baselines for best practice.**"

#### What are you expecting the results to reveal?

We're hoping that this research will reveal original insights of high relevance and value to decision makers and stakeholders within the Trusts who have made or are about to make investments in digitising the Trust through Electronic Patient Records (EPRs) and other clinical documentation.

We'd like the research to be good enough to provide a baseline within a Trust for clinical documentation accuracy and completeness to positively impact upon

- Patient care pathways
- Doctor/nurse productivity
- Trust-wide costs and savings

#### What have you learnt so far?

We've mapped acute pathway information flows from end to end and identified which areas in the information pathway are most sensitive to the quality and accuracy of clinical documentation and why this is the case.

We've identified clear implications for clinicians due to the lack of accuracy and completeness of clinical documentation.

We've identified key operation and financial data points impacted by clinical documentation for the Trusts involved in the research.

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**– We're expecting to publish the full report early in May 2015.**

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“Small delays caused by inaccuracy and incompleteness of clinical documentation within the acute phase of care are magnified by the time the patient reaches outpatient clinic.”

**Are there any insights you can draw from the research you've done so far?**

There are lots but for example:

- Although, for time and cost reasons we have restricted our research to secondary care pathways it is clear that the general issues highlighted extend into primary and social care too.
- Patient delays due to “information gaps” can be considerable and when aggregated will contribute to increased length of stay which is of course very topical with current bed blocking issues
- CCIO perceptions are that the benefit of the EPR is in having electronic information to enable decision support systems, improved safety, reduced communication delays and productivity gains. However, for clinicians this can mean the reverse.

**How do you think Trusts will be able to use the findings from the report?**

Impacts from completeness and accuracy of clinical documentation on patient safety, quality of care, staff productivity and patient satisfaction are all themes of high strategic value. However, this research goes a step further by using the Business Value of IT (BVIT) methodology<sup>1</sup> to derive an associated economic value to Trusts. As a result we hope the research findings could be used as a tool by Trusts to:

- Begin a discussion with department leads about benchmarks and improvement to identify data quality and process improvements and cost savings
- Develop business cases to make investments in people, process and technology to drive improvements in clinical documentation

<sup>1</sup> Business Value of IT (BVIT) Methodology  
BVIT is an approach gaining wide acceptance as a robust method of economic value assessment realised through use of information technology solutions. BVIT forms part of the IT-CMF (IT Capability Maturity Framework) developed by the National University of Ireland (NUI)'s Innovation Value Institute in association with Intel. The BVIT/Intel Business Value Model emphasises quantifiable benefits for which a financial impact can be determined, but full understanding of IT investments also acknowledges the many intangible gains that are produced. Using BVIT, benefits are assessed in terms of the impact on core strategic themes (or “value-dials”) relevant to a particular Industry and by applying this approach consistently across different potential projects, the comparable benefits profiles of competing projects can be readily assessed.

For healthcare the core BVIT value dials include; patient safety, quality of care, patient satisfaction, staff productivity, staff satisfaction, cost optimisation (i.e. direct cost savings as opposed to economic value released from other aspects) and revenue enhancement. By providing a tool for discussing, quantifying and monetising the value of healthcare IT investments, the BVIT/Intel Business Value Model is helping organisations make more data-driven planning decisions. This in turn should accelerate the time-to-value associated with the benefits enabled by healthcare.

## 1. Business Value of IT (BVIT) Performance Indicators

Value	Example Performance Indicators	Identifiable	Measurable	Monetizable
Patient safety	Clinical issued due to information errors	•	•	
	Access to latest version of records	•	•	
Quality of care	Reduced length of stay	•	•	
	Clinician time with patient	•	•	
Patient satisfaction	Response time to patient enquiry/results	•	•	
	Waiting times	•	•	•
Staff productivity	Reduced time on administrative tasks	•	•	•
	Reduced number of steps to ask	•	•	•
Staff satisfaction	Satisfaction survey/reduced turnover	•	•	
	Patient volume	•	•	•
Cost optimisation	Cost per patient stay	•	•	•
	Avoidance of duplicate tests	•	•	•
Revenue enhancement	Bed turns per month	•	•	•
	Number of patients treated	•	•	•

The full report will be available May 2015.  
To pre-order the report and for further  
information follow us at:

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