Care Response: a free ePROM system for the chiropractic profession

PATIENT-REPORTED OUTCOME and experience measures (PROMs and PREMs) are increasingly being used to collect information on a routine basis.

The information they provide may be used to demonstrate changes in health achieved by a patient attending a clinic and their experiences with this care.

In a report on chiropractic, the Institute for Alternative Futures (2013) describes a possible integrated future for the profession within the next 10 years with chiropractors entering mainstream medicine as 'the spinal health experts'. The route to achieving this is reported to be the profession's ability to demonstrate the experiences of patients through the collection and collation of PROM/PREM data from day-to-day practice. Practices able to show these results are more likely to succeed, with others becoming marginalised and increasingly struggling to attract new patients.

Whilst not able to come up with firm conclusions, a recent review of studies looked at the evidence from PROMs for patients with non-malignant pain. It suggests the information collected may contribute in four ways:

- During initial consultation to assess patients and assist decision-making regarding care
- During the course of treatment to track progress, evaluate current treatment and change the course of care if required
- Influencing the therapeutic relationship between patient and clinician
- Having a direct influence on outcomes such as pain and satisfaction

Use of paper-based PROMs can bring challenges in terms of time, resources and impact on patients and practitioners. However, the use of electronic approaches for collecting PROM data (ePROMs) brings significant benefits in simplifying collection and analysis, reducing administrative time, costs and paper, leading the International Consortium for Health Outcome Measurement to suggest that electronic systems are likely to be the dominant method in the near future.

Figure 1. Illustration of patient assessment – select area of problem by clicking on body map.
Care Response

Care Response is an ePROM system developed by chiropractic clinicians and academics to help clinical practices with the routine gathering of PROM/PREM data in day-to-day clinical practice. It is accessed via the internet and is freely available for clinical use via an online wizard which guides users through the set-up process (https://www.care-response.com/CareResponse/Registration.aspx). There are no charges made for its use. The system allows practices to automate the sending of requests to patients to complete assessment questionnaires which they can do either via the internet or in the clinic.

Patients are initially enrolled with their name, date of birth, and e-mail address by the practice. Usually this is done when they first call for an appointment.

In its routine use, Care Response generates a pre-examination questionnaire containing questions selected by the clinical organisation, with the system sending an email request to complete the assessment to the patients. Patients access the assessment via a link in the e-mail request.

This allows patients to complete the questionnaire on any computing device (PC, tablet computer etc.) able to access the internet (Figure 1). Alternatively, patients may opt to complete the assessment when attending their first appointment at the treating organisation either on paper (to be keyed in later by organisational staff) or more usually on an iPad or similar tablet while in the waiting area. At the time of any assessment request patients may opt out of participation and no further assessments are generated.

If the date of initial appointment is entered into the system, follow up questionnaires can either be generated automatically at timed intervals and sent to patients by e-mail or can be specifically produced at any time according to clinical need. The intention is that routine collection of PROM or similar information can take place with minimal work from administrators or clinicians at treating organisations.

Live results for individual patients are constantly available to treating clinicians with the requisite security access. These include graphical summaries of patients' PROM responses to facilitate quick interpretation and shared decision-making between patient and clinician during a consultation (Figure 2).

Information governance

Issues of information governance arise with the use of any electronic system for storing or transmitting patient data.

Access to Care Response uses encryption for transmitting and receiving information with no data being stored on users’ computers. Information is accessed via a user name and password combination.

All data is stored in an encrypted format. Data files containing patient identifiable data are separate from files with other information such as responses to survey questionnaires. Links

Figure 2. Example of results for an individual patient.

Figure 3. Collated summary of Patients' Global Impression of Change results for all patients in system.

Care Response also provides anonymised collated summaries of patients' results from within individual treating organisations and shared (anonymous) results from all participating organisations. It thus enables comparisons of outcomes for practitioners/organisations to reflect on (Figures 3, 4 & 5).

Figure 4. Collated results of patient satisfaction and number of visits at each assessment time.