

~ Health Provider Registry Practice Survey 2011 ~

Overview

Once every 2 years the Health Provider Registry (HPRy) team surveys its listed practices/users for quality improvement purposes and to explore interest in possible future developments. All SA private practices listed on the HPRy with an email address were invited to participate in the 2011 survey during August. At this time, health providers were being asked to contribute to many surveys and perhaps this impacted on the response to the HPRy survey. It was disappointing that the participation rate was much lower for this year's survey, down from 527 in 2009 to 143 this year – a response rate of 11%. Details of the participating practice types are:

	2009		2011	
	number	%	number	%
Total responses	527	100%	143	100%
General Practice	224	43%	41	29%
Medical Specialist	156	30%	31	22%
Allied Health	124	24%	56	39%
Other	23	4%	15	10%

42% of the responses overall were from clinicians, 35% from practice managers and the rest from administration or other staff.

Practice Information

Region

All practice types: 67% urban, 11% outer urban and 21% rural

Size of practice

All practice types: 38% solo practitioner, 40% 2 – 6 practitioners, 10% 7 – 10 practitioners, 6% 11 – 20 practitioners, 6% other eg hospital

Clinical software

Medical Director (68%) is GPs preferred clinical software, with Best Practice the next most common, in 27% of practices (up from 8% in 2009). All GP practices surveyed use clinical software.

About one quarter of Medical Specialists (23%) use no clinical software (down from 58% 2 years ago). Genie (40% of practices using clinical software) is the most popular, followed by MD3 (17% of practices using clinical software).

About three quarters of Allied Health professionals (74%) use no clinical software. Front Desk (26% of practices using clinical software) has the highest market share with a variety of profession specific software being used by a small number of practices.

Use of the Health Provider Registry by practices

All listed practices are offered web access to the HPRy data by secure logon for use in organising patient care and maintaining current details. 55% of all practices surveyed have a HPRy logon. 22% of practices who use the HPRy do so daily (up from 9% in 2009), with 11% logging on weekly and 17% monthly. A further 22% log on annually.

GPs most commonly source details for making referrals from the address book in their clinical software (80%) and only 2% go to the Health Provider Registry website as a first choice for this information. Specialists also use their clinical software address books most commonly (55%) but 23% use the HPRy website as their first option. Allied Health professionals most commonly refer to their colleagues (30%) while 9% go to the HPRy as first choice.

Practice managers, practice nurses and administration staff are the main users of the HPRy in GP and specialist practices although within these practices 40% of GPs and 28% of specialists access the data themselves. More than half (55%) of allied health practice access to the HPRy is by the practitioner.

87% of practices that use the HPRy find the information useful to very useful (up from 71%). GP practices find the names and types of medical specialists and the phone and fax numbers of other health providers the most useful data. Specialist practices find the names and provider numbers of GPs, the names and types of medical specialists and the fax numbers of other health providers most useful. Allied health practices find the phone and fax and provider numbers of other health providers the most useful.

92% of practices are satisfied to very satisfied with the HPRy web interface. Suggested improvements include being able to update clinical address books seamlessly from the HPRy, and having more data eg languages other than English spoken. (Languages spoken by health providers have already been included on the HPRy by those providers who choose to add it: 251 GPs, 63 Allied Health professionals and 35 Medical Specialists have listed a total of 67 languages other than English)

Discharge Summaries delivered using the HPRy contact details

The HPRy is the address book for the delivery of Separation Summaries from the public hospitals to doctors and relevant health services.

Timeliness of discharge summaries is still an issue: 11% (down from 23%) of GPs and 23% of specialists (up from 16%) are dissatisfied with this aspect. On the other hand 64% of GPs and 46% of specialists are satisfied to very satisfied. The content of discharge summaries is not such an issue, with only 4% of GPs and 16% of specialists rating this as unsatisfactory, while 89% of GPs and 69% of specialists are satisfied to very satisfied. This is a significant improvement on 2009 when only 63% of GPs and 51% of specialists rated content in this category.

GPs and specialists have differing views on the improvement in quality and timeliness of discharge summaries over the last 2 years. More than half (59%) of GPs think that the quality and timeliness of summaries has improved over the last 2 years, and 41% think that both have remained the same. Specialists have a more negative view with only one third seeing improvement in quality and timeliness, a half seeing no change and one sixth seeing deterioration.

The Health Provider Registry as a referral directory

The health providers rated most useful for future inclusion on the HPRy are dentists, especially those who provide Medicare services, and also optometrists.

There has been an increase in the use of the HPRy to locate health providers for referrals. 41% of respondents have organised a referral of a patient to an allied health provider (16% IN 2009) and 43% to a specialist (18% in 2009) using information on the HPRy.

More than two thirds of practices are interested to very interested in 3 of the recent upgrades to the HPRy: the advanced search option to find providers or services in a selected suburb or region, the inclusion of further details about practices (eg opening hours, billing arrangements, services) and languages other than English that health providers consult in.

Keeping the information in a directory up to date is an inherent issue. Currently the HPRy team contacts each practice once a year to check that their practice and provider details are correctly listed - the Annual Validation process. The team also makes 3 other email contacts during the year requesting that practices notify any changes. It is disappointing that only 1/3 of practices currently

support this level of data validation, but perhaps not surprising: on average about 80% of practices have no change to their details at each annual validation.

Future technical developments

Electronic communication of patient records is fairly high on the agenda for all health providers. For general practices the greatest interest is in discharge summaries, specialist referral and reply letters coming via secure messaging (93%) and also Team Care Arrangements (TCA) reports from allied health coming via secure messaging (85%). 80% of general practices would like to access patient hospital records remotely. While less general practices are interested in patient personally controlled ehealth records (PCEHRs) (69%) and tele health consultations (60%) these are certainly on the radar with many.

Allied health professionals are most interested in sharing TCA patient records and specialist referral and reply letters via secure messaging. They are interested but less so in receiving discharge summaries via secure messaging (70%), PCEHRs (60%), tele health consultations (55%) and accessing patient hospital records remotely (53%).

Specialists are most interested in receiving referrals via secure messaging and sending their reply letters the same way (92%). 80% of specialists would also like to access patient hospital records remotely. There is also some interest in PCEHRs and tele health amongst specialists with 63% and 41% respectively indicating their interest.

The majority of general practices either currently have the IT capability or require only a minor IT upgrade to receive discharge summaries, specialist referral and reply letters and TCA reports via secure messaging (93%). To participate in patient personally controlled ehealth records (PCEHRs) or telemedicine the majority of general practices would require either minor or major IT upgrades (80%).

Generally specialist practices are not so IT ready. Currently IT ready or requiring only a minor IT upgrade to participate in the initiatives surveyed: referral letters received via secure messaging (62%); referral reply letters sent via secure messaging (60%); discharge summaries received via secure messaging (57%); allied health TCA reports via secure messaging (55%); PCEHRs (55%); tele health consultations (42%)

The HPRy team would like to again thank the 143 clinicians and practice staff who participated in the survey. A full summary can be viewed [here](#). If you would like any further information about the survey, please contact the HPRy team at General Practice SA on 8271 8988 (press 1 for the HPRy) or email hpry@gpsa.org.au.