Background

The Using the Computer in the Consulting Room training programme was developed to address the previously recognised shortage of computing skills among general practitioners (GPs), and a reluctance to use the computer as a clinical tool/resource either during or outside of the consultation. Although some GPs feel comfortable with using the computer as a clinical tool, there are many that do not. In addition to the practical issues of learning the key strokes to locate a patient record and enter clinical information or prescribe a drug, for many there are philosophical issues that need to be resolved such as using and learning from information presented by a computer.

Aims

The aims of the Using the Computer in the Consulting Room training programme are:

- to increase the use of the computer during and after the consultation
- to encourage GPs to view the computer as a clinical tool/resource
- to provide a positive learning experience focused on the needs and requirements of the individual.

Methods

Each participating GP received one 30-minute individual training session in their own consulting room focused on their needs and abilities. The training was delivered by SCHIN-accredited GP System Supplier trainers; this was to ensure the training was system specific, and clinical system skills were taught alongside generic knowledge. This 30-minute session is followed by further training/support where required from SCHIN-trained primary care trust facilitators. Prior to participating in the training, each GP was aware of PRODIGY and had some basic knowledge of their clinical computer system.

Course modules

The course is divided into five modules, with one compulsory module – ‘The route to prescribing with PRODIGY’. Each module is tailored to the GP’s individual requirements; they may choose several or all of the modules for their training. It was not expected that all modules would be covered during the 30-minute session. The modules available are:

- room layout
- accessing PRODIGY
- the route to prescribing with PRODIGY
- dealing with conflicting advice
- sharing computerised information with the patient.

Evaluation of the training

Both the GP and the trainer complete paper-based questionnaires to evaluate the training; these are described below.

Pre-training questionnaire completed by the GP

This enables the GP to assess their current knowledge and use of their clinical system and PRODIGY. The
GP also indicates which course modules they would like training in. The completed questionnaire is made available to the trainer at least ten days prior to the training.

**Evaluation of the training by the trainer**

The trainer assesses the GP’s knowledge and skill level prior to and after the training, and makes recommendations for follow-up training/support.

**Evaluation of the training by the GP**

The GP assesses their level of knowledge and skills after the training, and their intention to use these during or after the consultation.

**Results**

The results of this programme are currently in analysis and will be available in time for poster submission.

**ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE**

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