

ROBOT TECHNOLOGY Gives Patients Fast Access to Overseas Specialists

Cutting-edge technology is allowing physicians from Lahey to consult with patients at Bermuda Hospitals Board through a robot, improving the speed and convenience of access to world class specialists in the US for patients and their families in Bermuda.

Referred to as RP-7, the robot carries a stethoscope that can be placed over a patient's heart and lungs while Lahey consultants in the US listen through special headphones. Doctors at Lahey can interact with patients, study their monitors and examine them with one of the device's two cameras, while conferring with BHB medical staff, patients and family members through the video monitor.

Lahey consultants can also discuss a patient's condition with other physicians, as well as with nurses, technologists and physio- or occupational therapists here in Bermuda.

Dr. Donald Thomas, Chief of Staff for BHB, said, *"Consultants at Lahey can now interact with our physicians and patients in ways that were never before possible. This new technology will further improve patient care for patients in Bermuda, by enabling timely access to overseas specialist consultants. As they do not need to travel for a consultation, patients can access specialist advice faster and have a less stressful experience. Additionally, reducing travel helps to control healthcare costs."*

Currently, KEMH is able to consult with Lahey specialists in surgery, infectious diseases, neurology, oncology, pulmonary critical care, vascular surgery, urology, orthopaedic surgery and gastroenterology.

The RP-7 robot allows families to see and speak to relatives who are receiving care at Lahey facilities. It can also be used for educational purposes. *"Telemedicine has great potential for the healthcare community,"* adds Dr. Thomas. *"Robot technology will especially impact care for Bermuda because of our remote locale. It is user-friendly and can solve problems related to the current local and worldwide shortages of healthcare workers."*



Lorraine Jones was an inpatient at KEMH in July and during her stay, she had a consult with a cardiologist from Lahey. *"I felt very comfortable with the robot,"* she said. *"I also felt reassured that a specialist from Lahey was talking to physicians here in Bermuda. I am grateful I had access to the best care without having to leave the island."*

It takes physicians at Lahey about 15 minutes to learn how to drive the robot down hospital corridors in Bermuda, using a joystick on their computer monitor as a guide. On their laptop, the doctors see the view from a camera mounted on top of the robot; they can swivel the screen to look around. In Bermuda, you can see the doctor's face on the monitor as it moves. You can even give it a Bermuda 'Good morning' as it passes by and the doctor will respond! The robot has sensors that keep it from bumping into people and walls.

"At first, patients are pretty amazed to see how the robot can turn around, roll out of the room and proceed down a corridor. But they soon adjust," said Dr. Thomas. *"However, the robot remains an adjunct to physician care. It still relies on humans to be plugged in and recharged!"*

Hourly Rounding Improves Comfort and Safety for Patients

Patients on Cooper and Gordon Ward are being checked by a nurse or nursing aide every hour during the day and every two hours at night, as part of a pilot programme introduced in June at King Edward VII Memorial Hospital (KEMH) to further improve patient satisfaction and safety.

Hourly rounding has benefited both patients and staff in many other jurisdictions where it has been introduced. In fact, recent studies from hospitals in the US found hourly rounding reduced the need for patients to use their call-light button. It also decreased the number of patient falls and skin breakdowns as patients are more regularly repositioned and helped if they need to go to the bathroom.

"Hourly rounding is part of our increasingly proactive nursing approach," said Preston Swan, Acting VP of Quality and Risk Management. *"We are closely monitoring patient feedback through our patient satisfaction survey and, after evaluating the pilot programme's impact on staff and patient care, we expect to introduce the practice hospital-wide. This is one of many initiatives we are looking to introduce in order to improve the patient experience."*

Hourly rounding requires nursing staff to check three areas of patient care each hour from 8:00am to 6:00pm, and every two hours from 6:00pm to 8:00am. The areas are Positioning, Personal Needs and Pain, and are referred to as the "3 P's".

"Patients tell us there has been a noticeable improvement in their care since we've introduced rounding protocols," said Michelle Barnett, Clinical Manager for Gordon Ward. *"And nurses have noticed a decrease in call bell use. Staff members on other units are looking forward to incorporating hourly rounding in the care of their patients."*



Sheila Whittaker, Clinical Manager of Cooper Ward, has seen hourly rounding welcomed by her patients. *"Checking on the patient every hour improves patient comfort, dignity and safety. If a patient knows a nurse will be coming within the hour, they feel less stressed and don't feel forced to press the call button for non-urgent issues."*

"This initiative is about anticipating what a patient requires and being available at regular intervals to find out how patients are doing," adds Preston Swan. *"Our new protocol is consistent with leading practices and has proven to better meet patient needs and improve staff morale."*

The "3 P's," of hourly rounding are:

Positioning:

Make sure the patient is comfortable and assess the risk of pressure ulcers.

Personal needs:

Schedule patient trips to the bathroom to avoid unsafe conditions.

Pain:

Ask patients to describe their pain level on a scale of zero to 10 and offer medication/ treatment, if necessary.



GETTING TO KNOW THE KEMH HOSPITALISTS Dr. Handel Emery

As you may well be cared for by one of our Hospitalists if you come into the hospital, we will be running a regular column to introduce you to the team over the next few issues of *Pulse*. BHB introduced the Hospitalist Programme in 2008 in order to provide a consistently high standard of care for people who have to stay in hospital. Headed up by Bermudian Hospitalist, Dr. Arlene Basden, Hospitalists are now responsible for most patients who are admitted to KEMH.

Dr. Handel Emery joined BHB in August last year and is a Board Certified Hospitalist. After growing up in Kingston, Jamaica, Dr Emery received his medical training at the University of the West Indies. He obtained his MBBS degree in 2000 and undertook an internship at Kingston Public Hospital before moving into private practice as a family practitioner. Dr. Emery also worked as an Emergency Room Physician while he was in private practice.

“During my two years as a family practitioner, I developed an interest in internal medicine,” says Dr. Emery. *“The diagnostic challenge posed by internal medicine truly fascinated me.”*

Having decided to specialise in this field, Dr. Emery undertook residency training at the University of the West Indies and was accepted as a member of the American College of Physicians upon completion. He then took a post as a consultant internist with the Jamaican government service and also began an internal medicine private practice. Dr. Emery was attracted to BHB by a colleague who had worked in Bermuda as a medical officer.

“My colleague spoke very well of his experience in Bermuda and recommended the hospital so I applied for one of the Hospitalist positions,” he said. *“I am very happy to be working here. In my experience, the Hospitalist team approach works well for both patients and physicians.”*

ELECTRONIC RECORD UPGRADES Patient Care and Safety in Emergency

A new charting system in the emergency department was introduced in July that centralises information regarding a patient’s care into one electronic record. The Emergency Department Information System (EDIS) accurately tracks a patient’s treatment, including tests, results and the patient’s location at any one time. The system is also used in the Lamb Foggo Urgent Care Centre.

EDIS has built-in safeguards, explains Chief of Staff, Dr. Donald Thomas *“Not only is patient information accurately collated in one place, the system will alert physicians if a treatment conflicts with medication orders or other treatments and automatically generates a faxed report to a patient’s physician when the patient leaves Emergency.”*

As staff members get acquainted with the new system and procedures, Dr. Thomas noted it may cause some delays.

“Delays should ease as staff members become more familiar with the system,” said Dr. Thomas. *“Until then, we ask the community for their patience. Because this initiative will improve care, it is well worth some initial inconvenience.”*

Dr. Thomas points out that the hospital’s triage system will ensure seriously ill patients are still seen quickly, even as staff transition to the new system. *“EDIS is designed to manage patients efficiently. The new Lamb Foggo Urgent Care Centre (UCC) in St. David’s has been using the same system since April. Physicians at the UCC note they have been gathering more information about patients and their treatment than ever before. In the long run this will help us adapt our service more around patient needs.”*

The UCC operates from 4:00pm to midnight during the week and from noon to midnight on weekends and holidays. It is also open for diagnostic testing during the day.

“Patients with non-urgent complaints may want to consider visiting the UCC where the wait to be seen is considerably shorter than at the emergency room,” Dr. Thomas advises.



New Ambulances Pack More Space and More Power, in a Small Size

Four new ambulances are now being used to save lives around Bermuda. The new ambulances have been designed to the specifications set out by BHB’s Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) to ensure they improve the patient experience as well as meet the demands of Bermuda’s small and challenging roads.

“New technology and design practices have enabled us to kit out our new ambulances with some of the same equipment you have in the Emergency Department,” noted Ray Santucci, Head EMT, *“and the installation of halogen lights improves visibility and helps us to respond to patient needs.”*

While there is improved equipment and power, the new ambulances have maximized space inside through the latest designs, while keeping the size of the ambulance small so that it can manage the tight roads and drive-ways of Bermuda.

“The width and shape of Bermuda’s roads are a challenge for emergency vehicles and so we purchased the smallest ambulances,” noted Mr. Santucci. *“However, modern engineering and technology have still enabled a vastly improved vehicle so that patients will experience a smoother ride. They will also find there is more space inside compared to our previous vehicles and non-stick flooring keeps stretchers firmly in place. This helps us care for patients too, even during a fast journey back to the hospital.”*

New Emergency Entrance Gives Better Cover

The new Emergency Entrance at King Edward VII Memorial Hospital is now complete. The new entrance provides a larger canopy for people who need to pop out to make a phone call, or are dropped off at the entrance by car.



New Psychiatrists Join MWI

In August, BHB welcomed new Chief of Psychiatry, Dr. Michael Radford, and Bermudian Consultant Psychiatrist, Dr. Chantelle Simmons, to the Mental health team at the Mid-Atlantic Wellness Institute.

Dr. Radford is originally from England and holds degrees from Cambridge University and London University’s Institute of Psychiatry. He is returning to us at the Bermuda Hospitals Board, having worked here between 1974 and 1985.

Dr. Simmons is a Bermudian who has trained in Canada and the USA. She is working with the Acute West and Turning Point services. Dr. Simmons is pleased to return to the Island and has noticed a greater continuity of patient care at MWI compared to some other jurisdictions.

“I very much appreciate my training in diverse settings over the past 15 years,” notes Dr. Simmons, *“but noticed how, in previous practice settings, inpatients were typically followed by one team in hospital and referred to an entirely different service upon discharge. At MWI, I look forward to collaborating with patients and treatment teams on a long-term basis.”*

Chief of Staff, Dr. Donald Thomas is very pleased to welcome Dr. Simmons and to welcome back Dr. Radford to the BHB team. *“These appointments play a vital role in our commitment to service excellence. We are very fortunate to have hired such qualified, skilled and experienced healthcare professionals. It also gives us great pleasure, especially, to welcome home a Bermudian candidate with such extensive training to our team.”*



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