

# Insights into EHR and Sub-Specialty Disease Management



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## First in a Four-Part Case Study Series

### Maintain and Analyze Glaucoma Patients with Electronic Health Records

By **Jennifer Balentine, MD**

**Patient History:** *An 85-year-old male who has been diagnosed with long-term primary open-angle glaucoma. Patient takes part in a local glaucoma study.*

Managing this glaucoma patient and my other patients has become easier because we use EHR in our office. In this article, I will discuss how well EHR works because I can quickly document and maintain the data from patient examinations. However, for a glaucoma patient it is even more helpful because it provides a very convenient way to maintain, compare, and analyze data over long periods of time.

#### View a Lot of Data at Once

This patient has had glaucoma for more than 20 years. With EHR I can quickly look at trends that may have occurred through the years without flipping back through many pages of paper charts. With the maximEyes EHR software that I use, I was able to customize a glaucoma flow sheet that enables me to see his last 14 visits all at once on one screen.

At a glance, I can see the following: dates of his visits; pachymetry readings with recommended corrections; the time of day his pressures were checked; whether the pressures have been trending up or down over the last few years; results of optic nerve exams; his ocular medical and surgical history; if his eyes were dilated; results of his visual field, HRT, and OCT testing; and reactions to different medications. That is a large amount of data that I can quickly analyze by looking at one computer screen.

#### Importing Images and EHR

The use of images is very important for glaucoma patients. With my EHR program I can readily access data like visual

field images, pictures of optic nerves and OCT, HRT, or GDx scans. I either directly import these images from my equipment, or if it is information that comes on a piece of paper, I can easily scan it into my EHR program.

For example, this male glaucoma patient has been involved for many years in a local study called “*Discoveries in Sight*.” Most of his ancillary testing is done at that location. Although I receive the information on a piece of paper, I can scan it into my EHR program to maintain and review it electronically.

#### Accessing Information Remotely

Another benefit of EHR is my ability to access patient information from multiple locations around the office and at home. When I am on call on the weekends, if this patient calls me I no longer need to extrapolate information from the patient over the phone. I can easily access his health records and look at the flow sheet to see all of his numbers—an important part of treating a glaucoma patient.

Glaucoma patients also tend to use a lot of drops and have problems with allergies. With this patient, I can look back as far as 1982 and see the various medications he has taken. I quickly analyze that he has taken Xalatan, Travatan and other medications, and that he has had an allergic reaction to one or more of them. At a glance I see that there is only one type of medication that he hasn’t tried. Finding this kind of information would be very slow and cumbersome with a paper chart.

#### Integrating Billing and Reports

Having the ability to integrate my EHR and practice management software has been a benefit for all my patients. I don’t need to rely on a billing person to alert me when insurance companies

are repeatedly denying or underpaying for certain ICD-9 codes. I run the reports and look at them when I have time away from the office. I can see where money is outstanding, either from patients or insurance companies, and the average turnaround time for Medicare. In addition, I frequently run searches based on specific ICD-9 numbers or CPT codes to look for trends.

#### A Smooth Running Office

With EHR, my office runs more smoothly and I feel that we have improved the quality of care for all our glaucoma patients. Records are never lost and they are always accessible. Images and data from exams are stored in an efficient way that is easy to analyze. Referring physician letters are readily available with a few clicks. Our glaucoma patients benefit in so many ways because we use EHR in our practice. ■



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