



Standardised Procedure Specific Consent Forms for Surgical Procedures: An Intervention to Improve the Informed Consent Process in National University Health System, Singapore

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INTRODUCTION

The National University Health System (NUHS) is an integrated academic health system in Singapore consisting of 14 entities, including 3 hospitals.

Informed consent is an integral part of the communication process in providing quality clinical care. To ensure **standardized and consistent information for patients** undergoing common procedures across NUHS hospitals, each clinical specialty developed harmonized **Procedure-Specific Consent Forms**.

These **Procedure-Specific Consent Forms** aim to provide patients with the necessary information to make informed decisions regarding their procedures.

AIM

The aim of this project was to **develop and integrate harmonized Procedure-Specific Consent Forms** within the New Generation Electronic Medical Records (NGEMR) platform across all NUHS institutions.

This integration ensures that **patients receive standardized information regardless of which NUHS hospital they visit**, facilitating a more consistent and patient-centered approach to informed consent.

METHOD

The project was initiated in 2021, involving the 17 clinical specialties in NUHS.

Development of **Procedure-Specific Consent Forms (PSCF)**

- Each clinical specialty identified common procedures to develop their **PSCFs**.
- PSCFs** were then created by each clinical specialty, in collaboration with NUHS Group Care Plan Operations, using standardised templates
- PSCFs** were vetted by NUHS Group Medical Affairs with inputs from NUHS Legal Office
- NUHS Enterprise IT team then built the **PSCFs** as **SmartText** in NGEMR
- Electronic Document Mailers are sent to all staff across NUHS Hospitals to inform them of the availability of the new **PSCFs** in NGEMR.

RESULTS

When NGEMR was launched in February 2022, 6 clinical specialties started off by developing **Procedure-Specific Consent Forms** for 66 common procedures. To-date (August 2023), a total of 124 **Procedure-Specific Consent Forms** across 11 clinical specialties have been built.

By keying in the **SmartText** for a specific procedure into the “*Insert SmartText*” field of the General Consent Form template in NGEMR, the procedure details are then auto populated without the doctor having to type out everything.

Step 1: Input the name of the Procedure

Step 2: Input the Procedure Specific Description

- Doctors may either type in the Procedure Specific Description, or
- Use SmartText (**Step 3**) to automatically generate the description for the specific procedure

Step 3: To insert a SmartText,

- Click on  to open up SmartText Lookup window (**Step 4**)

Step 4: Search for the relevant SmartText for the Procedure

Step 5: Select the SmartText after previewing it. The key information of the Procedure can be seen in the Preview:

- Name of proposed procedure
- Intent/Purpose of procedure
- Benefits of procedure
- What does the procedure involve?
- Risks of procedure
- Precautions to be taken prior to procedure
- Effects of treatment
- Alternative options to procedure

Step 6: Click on 

CONCLUSIONS

The success of the project relied heavily on leadership buy-in and the collaboration of clinicians across the 3 NUHS hospitals.

The implementation of **Procedure-Specific Consent Forms** has harmonised the process of obtaining informed consent for specific procedures across the hospitals.

Patients now receive a standardised set of key information, facilitating their ability to make informed decisions.

Additionally, doctors benefit from improved communication and accurate documentation, resulting in time savings by eliminating the need to fill in procedure details from scratch.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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REFERENCES

- Joint Commission International Accreditation Standards for Hospitals, 7th Edition, effective 1 January 2021.

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