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Enews

Report: Nurses Reject Tablet PCs, Citing Many Deficiencies

By Jeff Berman, Health-IT World News
More than 90% of nurses are disinclined to use Tablet PCs at the bedside, according to a study from Spyglass Consulting Group. Citing deficiencies such as durability, weight, size, and battery life, the study found that Tablet PCs are one of the least popular mobile computing applications for nurses.

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More than 90% of nurses are disinclined to use Tablet PCs at the bedside, according to a study from healthcare technology concern Spyglass Consulting Group.

Citing deficiencies such as durability, weight, size, and battery life, the study found that Tablet PCs are one of the least popular mobile computing applications for nurses.

"Nurses are overloaded with documentation duties and requirements," said Gregg Malkary, Spyglass founder and managing director. "Much of what they document is used for administrative purposes related to reimbursement and legal compliance issues. Physicians seldom refer to nurse-entered notes. If they need patient information from a nurse, they will ask the nurse directly. Nurses using Tablet PCs are having a difficult time being productive using inefficient applications."

Malkary added that there is a huge "disconnect" when it comes to analyzing a vendor's take on tablets compared to the nurse as user. "Vendors like to

showcase their tablets as the 'next big thing,' but users are disagreeing more and more. In theory, tablets should be effective because of their mobility, but there are issues with where to put them in an emergency situation, as well as the fact that the ergonomics of most hospitals are not conducive to these devices."

Data for the study were based on phone interviews Spyglass conducted with 100 nursing professionals. More than 50% of nurses interviewed said they spend more than half their time entering and documenting notes on care provided.

Malkary said that percentage may be lower for hospitals that are "wired," but he conceded "hospital administrators are not concerned about automation to make nurses more productive with IT-based solutions."

"Most hospitals are not helping nurses out, and healthcare technology vendors are not developing nurse-centric technologies," he added.

While Tablet PCs are proving to be inefficient for capturing and documenting patient encounters, Malkary said nurses are still using handhelds for standalone applications, such as drug reference manuals, calculators, and patient teaching aids. He added that many nurses are paying for these out their own pocket rather than waiting for a hospital to pick up the tab.

"Documentation requests from organizations like the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) are somewhat forcing nurses hands a little bit," said Malkary. "Nurses need to be accountable for every note they enter and that takes on added importance if they need to update conditions for more than 10 patients every 10 to 15 minutes."

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