

eConsultant: Reducing time to specialist input for chronic care patients

71 GPs are now signed up for eConsultant across **8 WQPHN** and **8 BSPHN** practices.

Answers to your frequently asked questions regarding eConsultant?

- eConsultant is available for public and private patients
- current turn-around time is 1.7 days for GP to receive eConsultant reply
- MBS rules are the same as those used by GPs to bill patients for generating a standard face-to-face OPD referral
- the physician's time is fully funded by the Mater
- the eConsultant Request For Advice (RFA) template is auto-populated from the patient record in the practice software, similar to usual OPD referrals
- the exchange between the GP and the Mater eConsultant specialist is via secure messaging both ways
- the model provides a documented record, for both the GP and the Mater, of the eConsultant advice

Areas of medicine covered by RFAs for the general physician eConsultant to date include: general medicine, endocrinology, musculoskeletal, haematology, renal, cardiovascular, hepatology, neurology, respiratory, gastroenterology.



Our Mater eConsultant, Dr Narelle Fagermo is passionate about her work as indicated by a recent email sent to the eConsultant research team:

"I have just spent the best few hours doing the last 4 RFAs. What fantastic medicine and how much fun I have had doing them. Great consults!"

Narelle is an Internal Medicine Physician at Mater Hospital Brisbane. She has extensive experience in teaching and as a hospital-based specialist treating patients with chronic complex comorbidities

eConsultant Case Example

Day 1 74yo lady with ongoing hyperparathyroidism & elevated calcium for several years. Vitamin D previously deficient but has since been corrected with supplements. Corrected calcium on the upper end of normal range and ionised calcium just above range with asymptomatic non suppressed PTH. Normal Vitamin D and se EPP. Most consistent with mild primary hyperparathyroidism. There is no evidence of end organ damage, no stones, BMD>2.5, no other symptoms. So is essentially asymptomatic. Her most recent BMD shows osteopenia. Pt denies hypercalcaemia symptoms
Background: HTN, hypercholesterolaemia on ARB and Statin

GP has 1 RFA Question: Should I organise further investigations & referral to endocrinology for management of possible primary hyperparathyroidism?
Have not yet checked renal calcium wasting, ?worthwhile.

Day 3 Physician responds with recommendation to check for 24 hour urinary calcium to determine whether FHH vs Primary hyperparathyroidism but will need washout of the Lasix before you do this as Lasix promotes renal wasting of Ca.

Washout Lasix for 2 weeks prior to testing. FHH is familial & therefore has implications for offspring.

Given asymptomatic & Ca still largely normal, would not recommend any further testing or investigation except for outlined above.

Does not need referral to endocrinologist unless develops symptoms or end organ damage or persistently elevated Ca(c) above 2.86.

Suggest after all above sorted, annual monitoring of renal function, Ca & second yearly monitoring of BMD.

Day 6 GP discusses advice with patient and changes routine surveillance.

Training for new staff or need a refresher

Attached are our Mater eConsultant PowerPoint training slides and a quick guide to sending an RFA to the Mater eConsultant. If you or a team member would like refresher training in the use of eConsultant please send a reply email with preferred dates and times to Dr Jenny Job – j.job@mater.uq.edu.au

eConsultant in a nutshell

Professor Claire Jackson (CHSRI), Dr Narelle Fagermo (our Mater eConsultant), and Dr Jos (GP, Leichardt Medical, Mt Isa) have shared their experience with eConsultant on a video kindly edited by Paul Stone from WQPHN. You can view the video at: <https://vimeo.com/441180658/6ece0d4cdd>

Sending attachments with an RFA

If you wish to send correspondence with an eConsultant RFA there is an option to send a second message with only PDF attachments by right clicking on the little “m” symbol in the software taskbar and selecting “create new message (PDF)”.

Do you have a question or observation about eConsultant?

Please email Dr Jenny Job j.job@mater.uq.edu.au if you have any queries or feedback regarding eConsultant, it would be great to hear from you

Our mailing address is:

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