

Our Mater eConsultant has received 167 requests for advice to date

Thank you to all the GPs and stakeholders for your ongoing support for the **eConsultant** service evaluation, we greatly appreciate the time you spend completing the data collection.

We recently met with the team from Champlain Base/ Ontario eConsult (our Canadian eConsult partners) who commenced their eConsult service in 2009. In the last 12 months they have received over 100,000 requests for advice from 4023 active primary care providers. The primary data collection tool used for their evaluation is the close-out survey.

Feedback from our 30-second [close-out survey](#) is invaluable to our evaluation. Here's what two GPs have to say:

"I appreciate being able to send through a referral and quickly get feedback on cases that are quite complicated and aren't covered by guidelines" (GP)

Excellent service for specific clinical questions which may not require an OPD. In this instance, I required a physician opinion on duration of anticoagulant therapy in a patient whom standard guidelines are not applicable." (GP)

For those needing a refresher on sending a Request for Advice – a quick guide is attached.

eConsultant Case Study Example

Day 1	<p>Current Problems: 49-year-old female who presents with biochemical thyrotoxicosis on background of previous hyperthyroidism of unclear type. Presenting with dyspnoea, fatigue, palpitations, and tremors. She is to have thyroid antibodies and an ultrasound scan of the thyroid. She has previously been on treatment but we are not sure which one and has stopped these some time ago. It is not clear if she was stopped as the antibodies and thyroid tests normalised, or if the issue was compliance.</p> <p>Abnormal thyroid function tests with normal ELFTs, FBC, and HbA1c. The Free T4 was 36.1, the free T3 17.9 with an appropriately suppressed TSH at <0.01.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would you start medication early for this patient while awaiting results? 2. Do you recommend any other investigations in the meantime?
Day 3	<p>Physician responds: At this stage I would want to confirm whether this is graves disease or thyroiditis. Positive TRAB's would confirm graves disease, and the options would be anti thyroid drugs such as carbimazole, radioactive iodine treatment or surgery. If the antibodies are negative a radioactive iodine uptake scan will be needed. If there is high or normal radioactive iodine then there is de novo hormone synthesis. If it is low or absent then thyroiditis is likely.</p> <p>In the interim a beta blocker should be started for symptom control if there are no contraindications for a beta blocker.</p>
Follow-up appointment	GP discusses advice with patient.

Our Mater eConsultant, Dr Narelle Fagermo

Director of General and Perioperative Medicine and Director of Physician Education at the Mater Adults Hospital in Brisbane has extensive experience as a hospital-based specialist, reviewing and treating patients with chronic and complex conditions.

Top hints for sending an RFA – download attached “Steps to sending”

Include:

1 – 2 targeted questions to orientate Dr Narelle to areas of focus.

As much information as you can about the patient including BMI and BP.

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)”.

Answers to your frequently asked questions regarding eConsultant?

- eConsultant is available for public and private patients
- GPs charge patient at the same rate as would for generating a standard face-to-face OPD referral the physicians time is funded by the Mater
- the eConsultant Request for Advice (RFA) template is auto-populated from the patient record in the practice software
- 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 (but not limited to) general medicine, endocrinology, musculoskeletal, haematology, renal, cardiovascular, hepatology, neurology, respiratory, gastroenterology.

Training for new staff or need a refresher

Our eConsultant program is ongoing and we are happy to provide support to get you started – if you or a team member would like refresher training via zoom or phone 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

A Mater eConsultant training video is now available and includes a brief overview of eConsultant and a quick guide to sending an RFA to the Mater eConsultant. Please reply if you would like a copy.

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>

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