

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT

SMS no action/normal results to consenting patients.

PURPOSE

To use SMS technology to notify consenting patients of no action/normal results, to reduce incoming phone call pressures and nurse workload.

(This briefing paper should be read in conjunction with the attached policy)

BACKGROUND

The majority of investigation results are normal and do not require any further action. No action/normal results are currently being actioned by the nurses – with a list that is continually growing. Utilizing SMS technology to communicate no action/normal results is a fast and highly effective process that would have widespread positive impact throughout the clinic.

Easing reception phone traffic, relieving nurse workload and providing GP's with ease of communication with their patients.

Consider this scenario:

- A result is checked by the GP and marked as No Action/Normal
- The practice nurse attempts to ring the patient, but no answer
- The patient rings the practice saying they missed a call but don't know who it is from
- The practice nurse gets the message that the patient rang back, so tries to ring the patient again
- The patient rings the practice saying they missed a call but don't know who it is from....and so it continues

This is not an isolated situation. It happens many times a day every day.

ANALYSIS OF THE ISSUES

- Lessing pressure and workload on nursing staff
- Minimize incoming phone traffic
- Effectively communicate no action/normal results to consenting patients
- Minimising financial outlay
- Frees up time for the practice team to focus on clinically significant results

SOLUTIONS

For those consenting patients, the treating GP should be sending a generic SMS to notify no action/normal results. This should be done direct from GP to patients, minimizing the need for nursing staff to phone the result through to the patient.

Patients with multiple tests, should only be notified when all results are received, and all results are normal. Patients with abnormal or urgent results should be contacted as per the current recall process.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk		Likelihood	Consequence	Inherent Risk	Mitigation Strategies	Residual Risk
1	Patient is unhappy about receiving a text	Moderate	Low	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reception ensures the patient has consented 	Very Low
2	The patient does not respond to the text	Likely	Negligible	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only No Action/Normal results are sent by SMS SMS policy and procedure circulated to all GPs 	Very Low
3	A third party see the text on screen	Unlikely	Medium	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMS message is generic and does not contain any clinical detail 	Very Low

The matrix below is commonly used to determine the level of risk and the level of response required.

Likelihood of risk	Consequences of risk (impact)				
	EXTREME	VERY HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
ALMOST CERTAIN	severe	severe	high	major	significant
LIKELY	severe	high	major	significant	moderate
MODERATE	high	major	significant	moderate	low
UNLIKELY	major	significant	moderate	low	trivial
RARE	significant	moderate	low	trivial	trivial

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Using SMS technology limits the financial outlay to TMC due to saving on nurse hours. Currently the SMS rate is 4c.

CONSULTATIONS

Reviewed by MP and Danny Haydon.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Reception continue to update and seek patient consent to electronic communications.
2. SMS policy and procedure to be circulated to all GP's.
3. Generic SMS templates are set up
4. GP's to send normal/no action results themselves when checking results off.
5. Current process stays in place for non urgent/abnormal results.

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COMMENTS

DECISION/APPROVAL

Delegation:

Date: