Rheumatology eConsults

Champlain BASE™ eConsult service improves access to specialist care for patients by facilitating electronic communication between Primary Care Providers (PCPs) and specialists.

From April 2011 to January 2015, 125 PCPs directed 225 eConsults to rheumatologists.

99% of cases took 20 minutes or less to complete.

Median response time was 1.9 days.

The most common questions from PCPs pertained to...

- 34% Drug Treatment
  - Choice of drug
  - Indications/goals of treatment
  - Adverse effects of drug
- 26% Diagnosis
  - Interpretation of a laboratory test, an image report, or a clinical finding
- 14% Management
  - Necessity of a referral

Content of questions asked by PCPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>% of eConsults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osteoporosis</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain, multiple joints</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflammatory polyarthritis</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Topics included: osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis; crystal arthropathy, gout; polymyalgia rheumatica; and fibromyalgia.

eConsults provided PCPs with advice for a new or additional course of action 54%.

Current treatment plan was validated 43%.

Referral was originally considered but avoided as a result of eConsult 38%.

Case Example

PCP asks question about a male patient experiencing fatigue and pain. Patient has no history of inflamed joints and presents normal bloodwork. PCP suspects fibromyalgia and has prescribed lifestyle changes (reduced hours, more sleep, hydration) as well as pregabalin. PCP asks specialist for additional guidance and if referral is needed.

Specialist approves of PCP’s diagnosis and treatment plan, and does not think further investigation is needed. Specialist encourages PCP to emphasize the importance of lifestyle changes versus medication, and recommends a group program that may be helpful.

PCP accepts the recommendation and closes the case.

http://www.jrheum.org/content/45/1/137.