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[Home](#) » [Five Issues That Prevent From Using Your EMR Effectively](#)

Five Issues That Prevent From Using Your EMR Effectively

ARTICLE | JULY 22, 2014 | BY IAN PUN

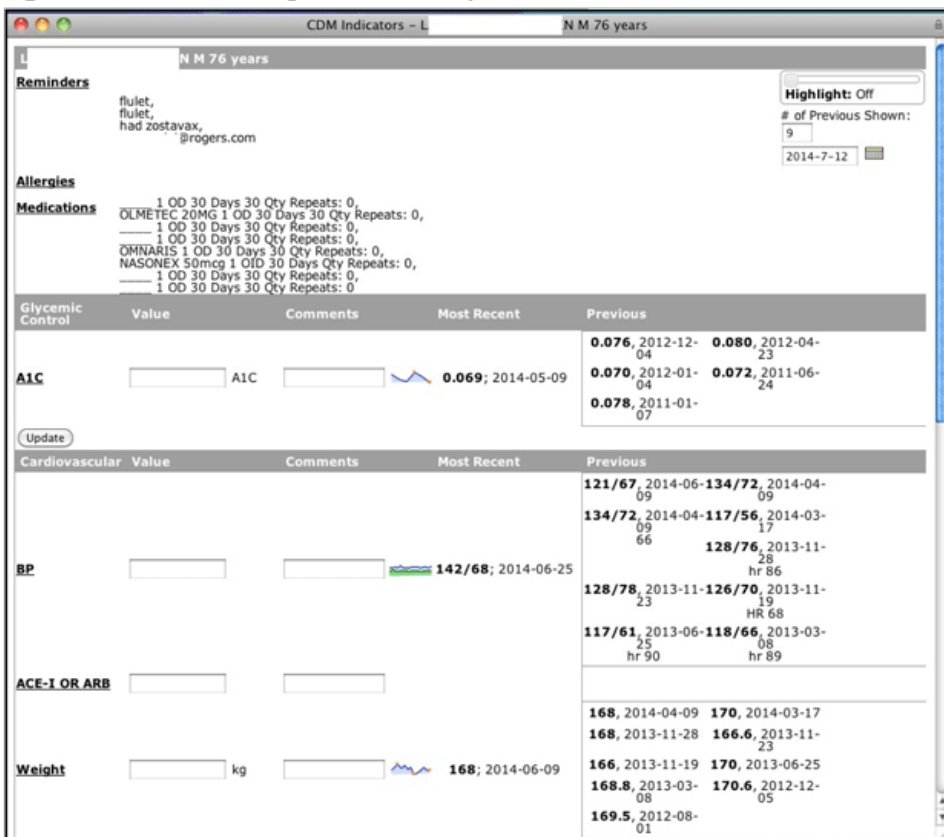
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easier to scribble a post-it note for your staff in half the time you can type an instant message. As you develop your computer skills, these tasks will go faster. Learn the keyboard shortcuts for your particular computer instead of having to go to your mouse and pulling down layers of menus. You can do a command in one keystroke. For example, to toggle between two applications, like your Firefox browser and your Email, use COMMAND-TAB. However, the keyboard short cuts may be inconsistent because different programs and operating systems. The most important computer skill is typing. But if you want to dictate , you can use dictation programs like Dragon Dictate. Even Google has the free online Chrome dictation feature but I feel uncomfortable having my medical information going out into the web to be processed.

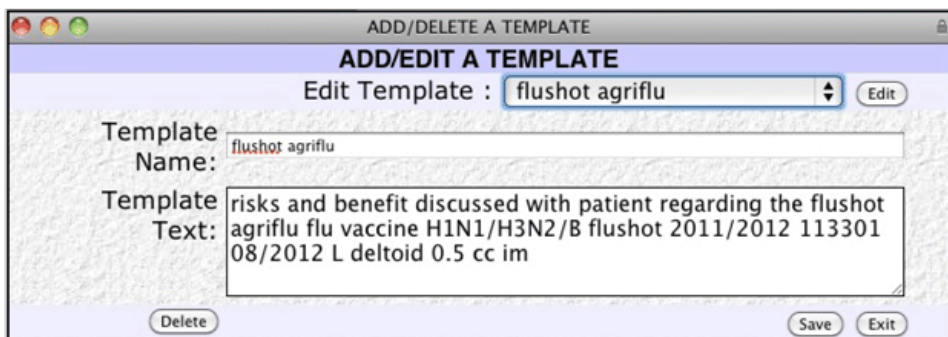
For trackable parameters such as weight and blood pressure. It is imperative to input this information into special fields called measurement fields. You can define any type of measurement to represent any type of numerical or textual data. Your newly installed EMR will not have much trackable data but after a few years, provided you have had the automatic lab downloads set up, this becomes useful as you can see trends in your patients blood tests. Also, the data can be searched for research purposes. Measurements screens can be customized. OSCAR provides a large Chronic Disease Management screen for you to input parameters as BP and weight. HbA1C is automatically entered as lab results come back online showing a mini trend graph (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Chronic Disease Management Indicators Input Screen



For repetitive text, you can program a template so you do not need to manually retype. Use a template when giving a flu shot with a particular LOT number (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Add/Delete a Template



4. You are still using paper forms and requisitions.

When you want to order an MRI from your hospital, you ask your secretary to find the specific form in the pile of custom printed requisition pads. You then ask her need to manually fill out or print out a label for the patient information and stamp it with your office address stamp. Then you manually check and write the tests you want. Then you want a copy for your chart before you hand it to your patient, so you scan it in and attach it. If you had an eform for this MRI, you would simply click on the eform you want. The patient information and your office information is automatically populated in the form. You then click or type the tests you want and then click print for copy for the patient. The copy is saved also in the patient's chart. It is a convenient way to order tests. However, programming of the eforms is also not a straight forward task and OSPs charge up to \$200 for each one. For

custom forms you use personally use constantly, this is a major time saver and is worth the cost. Many commonly used eforms can be downloaded free of charge from the OSCAR website⁹ such as this blood lab requisition even suggests tests for several medical conditions. When I click CHF, CBC, glucose etc. are checked (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Lab Requisition MOHLTC

The screenshot shows a web-based form titled "Lab Requisition Ministry Health Long Term Care". The form is for a patient named Ian Y H Pun, with a date of birth of 1959/01/11. The physician is Pun, Ian Y H. The patient's address is 123 Fake street, Scarborough, ON. The physician's contact number is 9876543217. The form includes a section for "CONDITIONS" with checkboxes for "CHF", "CBC", and "Glucose". The "INSTRUCTIONS" section states: "Nothing to eat or drink, except for water, for 10 hours prior to the test." The form also includes a list of tests to be performed, with checkboxes for "Biochemistry", "Microbiology", "Viral Hepatitis", "Immunology", "Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA)", "Microbiology ID & Sensitivities", "Vitamin D (25-Hydroxy)", "Other Tests", and "TSH, EKG". The form is signed by the physician on 2014-07-11.

5. Not going to the right people for help.

OSCAR comprises the second largest base of EMR users in Ontario so there is much community support. The first line of support is through your OSPs. Most OSP's provide exceptional service and will resolve your issues. OSCAR is an ongoing development so bugs are bound to surface especially when new features are released. When an issue arises, document the exact steps you did to reproduce the program and report it to your OSP. If you do not find a satisfactory answer from your OSP, the online OSCAR forum⁹ is useful as many other OSP providers and other OSCAR end users will respond to your issues free of charge. This user forum is BC based but it also services Ontario issues because there is no specific Ontario forum. Please share your experiences, good and bad, about OSCAR in this forum so that issues can be corrected. For advanced users, there is also a developers forum.¹⁰ In the unfortunate situation in which you OSP is not resolving your issues, you can contact www.oscar-emr.com.¹² McMaster University holds regular OSCAR conferences held by founder Dr. David Chan for all users, beginners and advanced to meet and learn.¹³

OSCAR is a community driven EMR program which evolving and improving from the feedback of all physicians, so if you have a issue or new feature you would like to see, please post a comment in the online forums.



SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Five Issues That Prevent From Using Your EMR Effectively

1. Using unsuitable computer hardware and software.
2. Using a slow internet connection.

3. Not inputting your data efficiently and properly.

4. You are still using paper forms and requisitions.

5. Not going to the right people for help.



CLINICAL PEARLS

OSCAR McMaster EMR is an ongoing product that is physician community driven. Use reliable computer hardware and networking.

Use a dedicated scanner. Use electronic forms. Code medical information properly. Go to online forums for help.

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