


Policy for nursing staff on the use of SMART/ Personal mobile phones for work purposes


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Reviewed by:

- Clinical Nurse Managers
- Clinical Facilitators
- Senior Nursing Managers committee
- Nurse Practice Committee



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1.0 Introduction

A Smartphone is a mobile phone built on a mobile operating system with advanced computing and connectivity. Most modern smart phones have high resolution touch screens with web browsers as standard. Wi -Fi and broadband can be accessed by most smart phones allowing instant access to the internet. Not all smart phones have the same operating system, but most operating systems support applications which are hugely beneficial to the healthcare setting. Many of these applications support the healthcare worker in the management of their patients care.

The complexity of healthcare requires access to specialized knowledge and expertise. Use of the smart phone in the clinical setting will enable the provision of instant access to a wide source of evidenced based data to enhance knowledge and practice for nurses and allied health care professionals. For example the US National Library of Medicine offers instant access to Pub Med for all operating systems to provide updated clinical information to the healthcare professional at the bedside.

Notwithstanding the advantages of the use of the smart phone in the clinical setting there is also an obvious requirement to balance its functionality while guiding the healthcare professional in their appropriate use in the workplace (Wyatt & Krauskopf 2012).

2.0 Background


Smart phones are central to the lives of most healthcare workers today posing both challenges and benefits to their use in the healthcare setting. (Gill, 2012). In 2011 75% of physicians in the US have at least one Iphone. It is assumed that this percentage is replicated worldwide.

A survey in the UK revealed that 73% of nurses and midwives stated that they carry a mobile phone while at work (RCN, 2010). This survey also revealed that a significant number of staff indicated that they used their phone to contact patients and medical colleagues, access the internet and use apps.

In Ireland, Smartphone usage has increased exponentially. The use of the smart phone in the workplace to facilitate practice has increased with the creation of applications which support the complex aspects of nursing and medical care.

In Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin (OLCHC) an application, devised by the pharmacy department to replace the Hospital Formulary has been in use for two years. The OLCHC Formulary application is used by many clinical staff. This allows staff access to up to date information on medications which support safe medication practice in the clinical area. This application has replaced the previously used printed formulary which had the costly disadvantage of requiring updating and re-printing on a yearly basis.

OLCHC believe that information technology (IT) is now an integral part of healthcare and the use of handheld IT devices will increase in the coming years. This increase brings the added challenge of managing the introduction of such technology safely in the healthcare setting (or environment).

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Improper use of social media by nurses could result in violation of the 'Code of Practice for Nurses and Midwives'(NMBI, 2013). Violation of nurses conduct could result in potential 'fitness to practice' issues for the following reasons:

1. Failure to realise that posting on social media is not private and can be disseminated to others.
2. Inadvertent breach of patient confidentiality
3. Defamatory comments about patients
4. Defamatory comments about colleagues

Parent's perceptions of the use of the mobile phones by healthcare professionals in the workplace may be varied. Parents may misconstrue use of smart phones by staff believing them to be used for personal use such as 'texting or tweeting' rather than the facilitation of improved patient care.

It is the view of the senior Nursing Management team that staff can use their phone during their working day for the purpose of facilitating patient care.

3.0 Applicable to

All grades of nursing staff. This includes undergraduate and post graduate and qualified nursing staff who work in OLCHC.

If staff choose to use their phone they must adhere to the following guidance.


Failure to adhere to the guidance below may lead to disciplinary action taken against you.

4.0 Points to note

If staff use the smart phone for assistance in the clinical areas the following guidance should be followed:

Do's

1. Ensure you are aware of OLCHC's guidance on security and confidentiality of patient information
2. Always adhere to OLCHC's guidance on data protection.
3. Always adhere to the OLCHC guidance on Email/Internet/Intranet usage.
4. Ensure your phone is on silent at all times in the clinical area
5. Always use professional judgment when using your phone in the workplace
6. Always adhere to the OLCHC Policy on Social Media
7. Always decontaminate hands before and after phone use
8. Ensure your phone is decontaminated on a frequent basis using the appropriate disinfection wipe as per manufacturer instructions. Brady & Brown (2012) have shown considerable contamination of mobile communication devices in the operative environment.
9. Your personal phone may be used to calculate medications
10. Your personal phone may be used to access applications which are for clinical purposes

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Don'ts

1. Never give your mobile number to a patient/parent.
2. Never contact a patient using your personal mobile phone.
3. Never use your personal phone to text friends or family during the working day except on official break times
4. Never use you personal phone to take photos of patients in the workplace, including photos of lesions or wounds, the hospital photographer will photograph patients for clinical purposes.
5. Never access Facetime, Facebook, Twitter or any other social networking sites during the working day.
6. Never discuss the patients, families or any information from the workplace over social media networks at any time.
7. Always adhere to the OLCCH Policy on Social Media for nursing staff (2014) when using your mobile phone in the workplace. **Failure to adhere to this Policy could result in disciplinary action.**

5.0 References

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