

Editorial

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT): MEANS OF IMPROVING PATIENT CARE IN OT & ICU

The information technology immensely influences the medical practice, education and research which include computer system and communication tools. Impact of information technology on medical profession is increasing in the same race as with development of component technologies like processors, memory, network and software. Recently the physicians are becoming more familiar with information technology in applying these tools to their patient management.

Computer

A computer is an electronic device that accepts, processes, stores and then output the data according to programmed instructions. The computer and the information it provide, are being used in the ICU and operation theatre, where the patient's life is at the stake. Like the other specialty, anaesthesiologists also find it very convenient to use computerized devices to serve their purpose. The internet is probably the most reliable source from where much information can be obtained. In most developed countries, the whole medical community has been linked together through broadband and net telephony. The dominant component of the internet is World Wide Web (WWW). The web transmits both text and graphics to a user's computer screen through browsers. Beside web, other forms of communication on the internet continued to be vital in facilitating communication. Electronic mail (e-mail) is text-based form of communication employed by most internet users in a store-and-forward fashion. The protocols and procedures of the operating room and critical care of some leading medical institutions are available on net. The electronic form of Journal and current references are available globally. The online consultation practice is available in developed and some of the developing countries. Now-a-days, the internet has been associated with anaesthesia in various ways. Many web sites have been developed where informations are available about anaesthesia, OT & ICU. But it should be used with caution. Long and inaccurate sitting posture in front of computer may causes deep vein thrombosis and backache.

Cell Phone

Cellular phone improve communication and proved to be effective in updating the medical specialties. The Anaesthesiologists are highly mobile during the working hour. Mobile phone is the best to keep in touch with these busy hospital staffs. It is also beneficial for multi-disciplinary care of the patient in ICU; where a prompt and accurate communication improves outcome of the patients. The patients in the hospital feel lonely and felling of isolation is minimized by talking to the relatives and other family members. Relatives sometimes have relied important information to the other family members. The cell phone in medical scenario includes text messaging to keep in touch with patients about appointments, treatment investigations, regular intake of medicine and preoperative findings for OPD anaesthesia. Cell phone is not without problem. Cell phone-operate with radio frequencies (RF) of 3 kHz – 300 GHz, which is one of the important form of electro-magnetic energy. The radio frequency energy is absorbed in human body at-specific absorption rate. When this absorption level is increased, the patient may suffer from harmful biological effects. Excessive use may cause headache, nausea, dizziness, sleep discomfort and difficulty to concentrate. Mobile phones should not be used in areas, where medical electronic devices are used in patient care like CCU & ICU, HDU, OT, Cath Lab etc. Effect of long term use is not-yet-known. Till to-day, use of the device is considered safe.

Conclusion

Internet and mobile phones have been proved to be patient friendly. The anaesthesiologists and critical care specialists are the best subscribers for these information technologies. The information technology can not solve all the problems but it seems to have a genuine role in the day-to-day medical practice which is now considered to be an integral part of their patient management.

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