
Siemens Audiology Process Innovation Creates Time and Quality Efficiencies



The Department of Hearing Services at The Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust has announced the results of a study into Real Ear Measurements (REMs) - the process of verifying a patient's hearing prescription against the real ear acoustics of a hearing aid to ensure an accurate fit - using a specialist audiology technology solution compared to manual adjustments.

Results illustrate that the time to gain REMs was halved from 31.6 minutes manually to 14.1 minutes via the AutoFit solution from Siemens Hearing Instruments. Overall appointment times were reduced from 45.5 to 30.8 minutes and percentage of return patient visits reduced from 20% for manual REM fittings within 3 months to 0% for fittings using AutoFit. In a climate of Any Qualified Provider (AQP) and the Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QIPP) programme, the newly implemented technology solution can provide departmental and Trust wide efficiency gains.

The study opens the potential for more patients to be seen by the Department of Hearing Services during the working day, and for greater quality time to be spent during appointments for hearing loss counselling or discussion of services. The AutoFit solution also helps standardise REMs across the department. Furthermore, a reduction in time of follow up fitting appointments, a reflection of accuracy of fitting, has the potential for cost savings and waiting list enhancements.

Sarah Hinchcliffe, study author and Audiologist at Department of Hearing Services at The Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust comments, "We started using AutoFit from Siemens at the beginning of 2012, moving over from manually adjusting Real Ear Measurements. The departmental audit comparing manual to automated adjustments has demonstrated that in a time of diminishing returns in the NHS, the AutoFit tool can maximise efficiency without sacrificing patient satisfaction. We feel it's a valuable resource for an audiology department with the emerging reputation based initiative of AQP."

"More quality time with patients coupled with efficient and accurate hearing instrument fitting appointments are essential to audiology departments and Trusts striving for competitive reputations," states Wendy Davies, National Sales and Audiology Manager at Siemens Hearing Instruments. "The Any Qualified Provider initiative means that departments are looking to provide a good service that patients are satisfied with year on year. The audit study at The Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust helps provide data illustrating that specialist solutions such as AutoFit helps influence QIPP scores in the areas of increasing rehabilitation time and time saving."

For more information, please visit: www.siemens.co.uk/hearing

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