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### **Smart Australian research will save lives**

Sydney-based CRC Smart Internet Technology and its innovation partners have launched a breakthrough technology pioneered by researchers at UNSW that will save patients lives in our hospitals.

Work by UNSW researchers Professor Enrico Coiera and Associate Professor Wayne Wobke on clinical communication in hospitals identified that most patient care carried out by a typical multidisciplinary team (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dieticians, for example) is interrupted by normal events in a busy hospital such as emergencies, shift changes, and so on and this can cause major problems in ensuring effective handover care.

Handover care - when one medical team goes off shift and another team begins – has been a major source of problems and frustrations for medical teams and patients as vital pieces of information can slip through the cracks between shifts. In the rare worst cases, patients have died as a result. Research by Coiera and Wobke first analysed the clinical setting and then developed software that allows health team members to create a “Clinical To Do List” that can be recorded at a patient’s bedside using a PDA or tablet computer. This electronic record can then be easily stored and accessed by the next shift, with patients with more serious conditions being flagged for additional observation. Team leaders can also view the task lists of their team members to ensure patient care is optimised.

The system was developed through a clinical trial at the Renal Unit of John Hunter Hospital near Newcastle, under the leadership of renal specialist, Dr Paul Trevillian. Working with iClinix, a Sydney-based developer of innovative clinical software systems, Smart Internet, researchers Coiera and Wobke and the John Hunter’s renal team members developed the “THOMM” product that provides effective and safe handover of patient care with less paperwork and significantly (around 90%) fewer errors and no addition to the already heavy workload. Further, the iClinix product “THOMM” integrates with existing hospital systems including the Transet database that manages renal patients awaiting transplants, and allows a patient’s test results, observations, X-rays etc to be viewed at the bedside.

Despite being advised by leading international experts in the field that it would take at least 5 years to develop an integrated, wireless electronic handover system that would communicate with the hospital’s existing software, the team have seen the project finalised in just 2 years.

“Not only is this a life-saving technology, it is also a clear demonstration of the success that is possible when Australian research is supported by effective commercialisation strategies and industry partnerships,” said Warren Bradey, CEO of Smart Internet CRC.

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