



Getting smart with smart phones: guidance for doctors

When—and when not—to use a phone camera during a patient's treatment is at the heart of a new publication by the New Zealand Medical Association (NZMA) and the New Zealand Private Surgical Hospitals Association (NZPSHA).

'Clinical images and the use of personal mobile devices' sets out the key ethical and legal issues clinicians and students should be aware of when using mobile devices to help with clinical care.

NZPSHA President Dr Ian England said his organisation recognised the need for a succinct, practical guide on clinical images and the use of personal mobile devices to assist clinicians and staff working in member hospitals. "As an organisation that represents private elective surgery providers throughout the country—and promotes excellence in healthcare—the NZPSHA is pleased to partner with the NZMA to produce this resource for health professionals and health facilities in New Zealand".

"NZPSHA recognises the value of using mobile devices in clinical settings and understands that clinical images must be treated with the same privacy and confidentiality as any other health record. This guide is intended to assist with this."

NZMA Chair Dr Stephen Child said technology that can help care more effectively for patients is always welcome, and use of personal mobiles is increasingly common.

"It's a great bonus for patient care, and a natural evolution of the doctor/patient relationship but care must always be taken to ensure appropriate use," he says. "This guide can help ensure responsible use and we look forward to sharing it—particularly with students and young doctors, who have grown up using this technology every day and are keen to use it to help them in their work life."

Clinical images and the use of personal mobile devices has been adapted, with permission, from a publication produced by the Australian Medical Association and the Medical Indemnity Industry of Australia. Copies of the NZ guide are available from the NZPSHA and the NZMA.

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