

4 weeks 14.2.2014

Hospital emails

Sir, Matt Hancock's insistence that the NHS should send emails to patients instead of letters ("Replace patient letters with emails, health secretary tells GPs", Feb 13) is a good start to ensuring that patients receive more joined-up care but to really improve patient care the NHS needs to fully embrace technology. There have been too many cases of patients slipping through the cracks because outdated NHS systems are letting them down, and asthma care is a prime example of this.

Research from Asthma UK released this week has revealed that tens of thousands of people with asthma could be missing out on lifesaving follow-up care from their GP after having emergency treatment for an asthma attack. They should be getting this care, in accordance with national guidelines, as they are at increased risk of having another asthma attack. But many patients are not being notified, and the NHS systems do not allow doctors in hospital to alert a patient's GP of the need for a follow-up appointment. The NHS needs to put in place better technology that

will allow for patients' care records to be shared across primary and secondary care and will automatically book GP appointments for patients if they have had emergency treatment for asthma. This will help to identify patients at risk of an asthma attack and help ensure they get the follow-up care that could save their life.

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