

From pen to paper to better healthcare

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Monash alumna Rachel Thom using the digital pen at Frankston Hospital

A digital pen equipped with a small camera that can automatically transfer patient information to a computer database will radically improve the way hospital staff care for their patients.

The Enhancing Patient Management at the Point of Care Using Electronic Clinical Pathways (or the Digital Pen and Paper) project, is currently being trialled at Peninsula Health's Frankston Hospital, for [patients](#) with fractured femurs.

The Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage project will see nurses and Allied Health professionals use the digital pen when filling out the digital paper patient forms. The camera will store the information entered and transfer the de-identified patient information directly to a computer database to be displayed in the nurses' workstation.

Project Manager, Dr. Virginia Plummer, from Monash University's School of Nursing and Midwifery, said the project was aiming to investigate how patient care can be improved by using technology not currently implemented in Australian public hospitals.

“Public hospitals in Australia are under ever-increasing pressure to become more efficient while continuing to provide world-class health care to a growing Australian population,” Dr. Plummer said.

“The current clinical research in Australia seeks to better understand service utilisation aspects and how new technology can help them achieve this.”

The types of [patient information](#) displayed, such as time to surgery, level of pain, heart rate, temperature and length of stay will provide greater opportunities for nurses and other clinicians to better manage beds by having fast and easy access to patient data.

“More efficient data collection will lead to improved health record security, faster health information transfer and decision-making, therefore leading to improved patient outcomes,” Dr. Plummer said.

The [Digital Pen](#) and Paper Project was launched in March 2012 at Ward 5GN Frankston Hospital and is funded by the ARC, Monash University, NEC, Peninsula [Health](#) and the Print Media Group.

Provided by Monash University

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