

ON-LINE NOTIFICATIONS AND E-SERVICES PLATFORMS

Dr Tan Tze Lee

SFP2011; 37(2): 4

The 21st century consolidated the transformation of our global community into an electronically connected global village. In the thirty years of the Internet revolution, it has evolved from being a fledgling portal between academics in the 1980's to being the behemoth it is today.

E-commerce, E-mail, E-medicine; just about every aspect of our lives is touched by the on-line electronic world. How much more so is the situation in our citystate, where just about every home has access to broadband.

The medical landscape has also evolved. Many functions of medical notifications now have an electronic equivalent. Myriad E-Services are also available now online, often saving the busy professional a trip down to the Ministry of Health or other agencies. These changes allow for more efficient use of manpower as well as reducing paper and office clutter.

In Unit 1, we note that on-line notifications include notifications of infectious diseases, of industrial diseases and accidents, post-vaccination adverse reactions, and reporting of adverse events to health products.

In Unit 2, we are reminded of the Infectious Diseases Act of 1976 and the evolution of the notification process. The accuracy of on-line notification of cases of Infectious Diseases will save the delay that will result from the additional time and effort taken to verify information as the result of missing data and illegible handwriting

TAN TZE LEE, Honorary Editor, College of Family Physicians Singapore

in fax transmissions. Timeliness of release of outbreak information will be improved.

In Unit 3A, we are reminded of the CD-LENS, the "Communicable Diseases Live and Enhanced Surveillance System" which was launched in 2006. This one-stop Internet portal is a godsend for medical practitioners to keep abreast of infectious disease developments. In Unit 3B, the steps for doing e-filing are described.

In Unit 4, we note the need to diagnose and notify cases of occupational diseases. A good working knowledge of the notification process in this area will enhance our ability to increase notification rates.

In Unit 5, we revisit the uptake of immunisation and its role in preventing disease. Immunisation has been an essential component of our medical armamentarium since the days of Jenner and Pasteur. However apart from infant vaccination, rates of other vaccinations remain less than ideal. E-notification can help monitoring and surveillance of vaccination rates, with the aim that vaccination rates can improve and this in turn will be translated to better herd immunity.

In Unit 6, we note the importance of reporting of adverse events to health products. The paper provides good insight and advice on the necessary steps to make in a report, and the process is now made all the easier with the e-Services platforms.

As IT continues to evolve quickly in our Singapore society, we too as medical practitioners need to adapt to embrace these new technologies, so as not to be left behind. This issue of the SFP aims to create an awareness of the benefits of on-line notifications and e-Services platforms to deliver services and care for our patients.