
warfarin patient self-testing

Pendleside Medical
Practice, Clitheroe



Pendleside Medical Practice in Clitheroe has recently been able to offer a new kind of connected self-care to patients prescribed warfarin. Patients are able to test their own blood at home, and send their INR result directly to the practice via an app called **engage**.

Rosalee is a patient at Pendleside Medical Practice. Her doctor, Dr Lucy Astle, talked to us about implementing the project at Pendleside, which is part of a wider project involving 5 practices in East Lancashire CCG, and supported by the Innovation Agency.

“We were struggling with our **anticoagulation clinics**. They were very busy and **time consuming**. It seemed there was potential to reduce the time commitment for **both patients coming in** and the **nurses running the clinics**.”

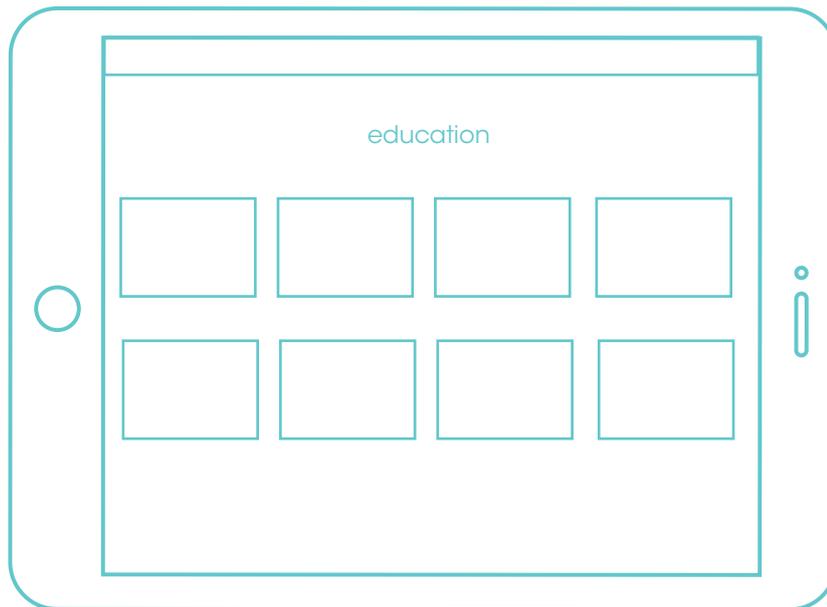


Some of Dr Astle’s patients were already self-testing using their own devices. However they still needed to speak to the practice nurse to convey their INR result, and discuss any issues.

“Patients, especially **working-aged** patients could spend a lot of **time trying** to speak to the **practice nurse**.”

The **engage** app is a solution to this problem. The patient sends the INR result directly to the practice's warfarin-monitoring system, **INRstar**, along with answers to safety questions and any other information they wish to provide. This information is also filed back to the clinical system, thus providing a continuous narrative.

“The **educational aspects** of the app and digital tutorials help patients to **increase knowledge** of their **condition and medication**. They hopefully **better understand** what they are doing and why they are doing it.”





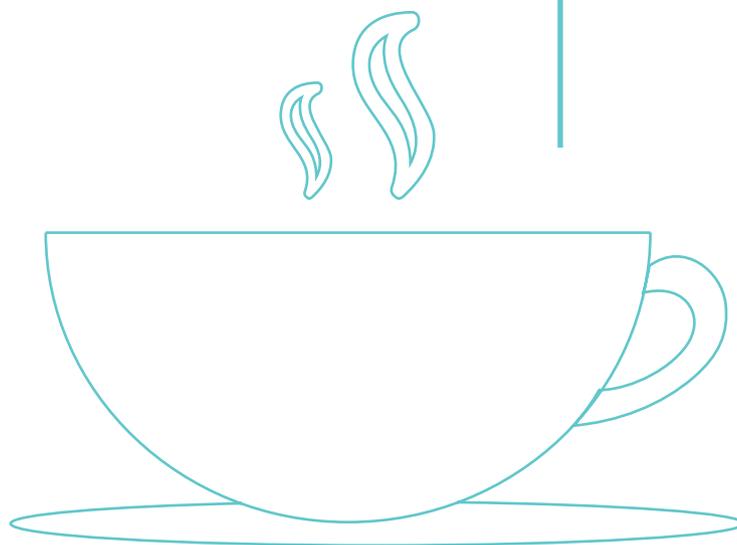
The project already had some unexpected benefits, particularly for patients who had needed to stop warfarin on a temporary basis.

“Rosalee has had several procedures recently which has **meant testing her INR regularly**, sometimes on a daily basis. Previously she would have **travelled** to the practice to do this, **but because she is self-testing**, she has been able to test and send her own readings **from the comfort of her own home.**”

Rosalee Stevenson is a 66 year old patient at Pendleside Medical Practice. She has been taking warfarin for atrial fibrillation for the last 6 years. She has found self-testing to be “invaluable”.

We asked Rosalee whether she would recommend self-testing to other patients on warfarin.

“It’s so simple. It’s given me peace of mind, and **I know it’s there** in case I don’t think things are right. If I go to the dentist or have a shoulder injection, I’ve got to stop warfarin. **With self-monitoring I know** I can come back and **test my INR**, and get it back to the level. It’s **just peace of mind.** I would recommend it to anybody. **It’s wonderful.”**



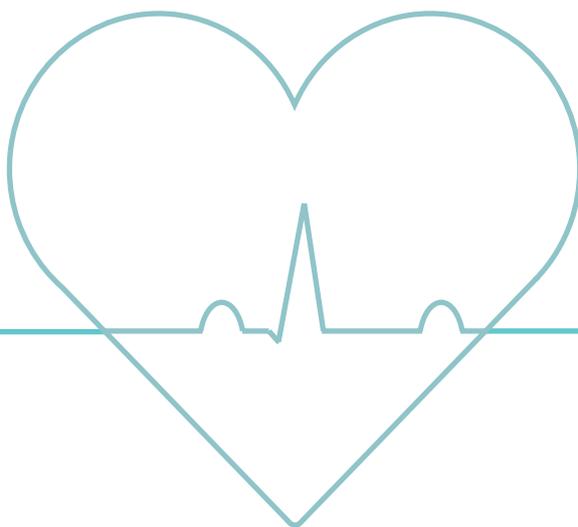
How easy it is to enable patient access to connected self-care?

Dr Astle told us that their approach to offering connected self-care to patients had been completely open.



“We decided not to make our own judgements about **which patients** we thought would be **good at self-testing**. We offered it as an option to **all of our patients on warfarin**, and have sometimes been **surprised with the outcomes**. Many of our **older patients** within the project have been as **enthusiastic and successful** as our younger patients who we may have expected to be **more ‘tech-savvy’**.”

“What we say to our patients is ‘there is an **option** to **monitor your warfarin at home and online**. Why not go away and **have a look at the training** to see if you like it, and if you do, **have a go**.’ This hopefully helps to **empower patients** and promote **self-management from the start**.”



“We want our **patients to feel well and stay healthy**. Although they may have **medical conditions** needing warfarin, we want to be able to **reduce the medicalisation** of this, and for them to be **able to manage** their medication from **home or on holiday!**”

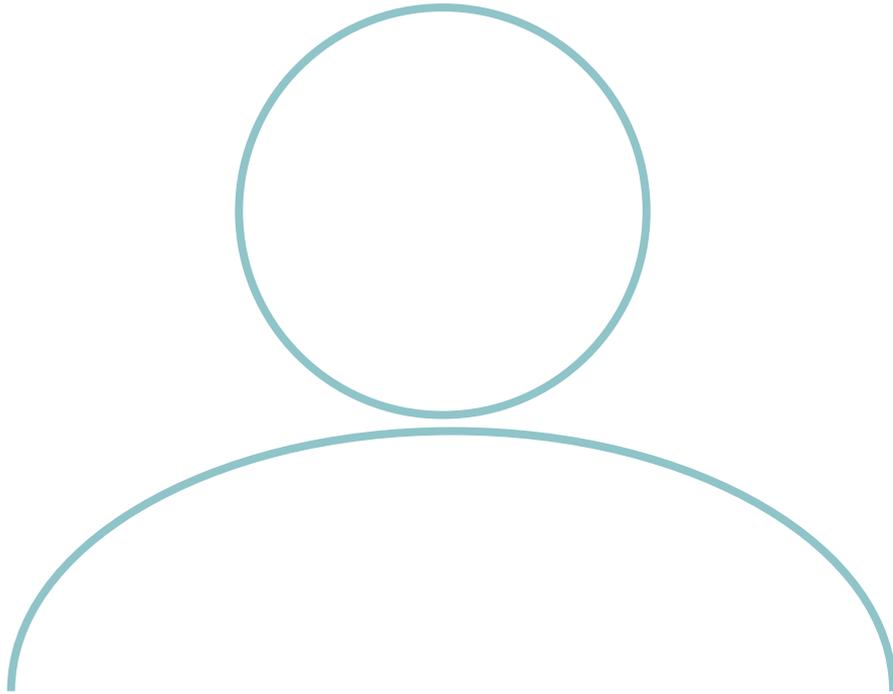
Faster data with less risk of error

engage sends data to **INRstar**, which in turn files back to the clinical system so offers a continuous narrative of the patient within, which in turn offers safety benefits and reduced risk from transcription errors. Lucy said:

“The **engage** app **sends patient data directly** from their **self-monitoring device** to the practice’s **warfarin-monitoring system**, which is also linked to the electronic patient record. This **reduces the risk of transcription errors**, and therefore offers a **safety benefit for the patient** and the practice.”

“The **seamless connectivity** was the reason we chose to use the **engage** app.”





What has been the biggest advantage to self-monitoring so far?

“**Flexibility and independence** for the patients around their warfarin therapy, followed by the **potential to improve patient care**. We have already seen some **improvements** in a measure used to assess the **effectiveness of warfarin therapy** called **time-in-therapeutic range**. In Rosalee’s case her warfarin **control is better now than it has ever been**, and we **hope** this result could be **seen in other patients self-testing**.”



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