

## Unmoderated Posters: Socioeconomics and Manpower

### UP-54

#### **Economic and Time Costs Attributable to Electronic Communication with Patients: Analysis of 2276 Email Interactions**

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**Introduction and Objectives:** E-mail communication impact on urosurgeons has not been evaluated in the context of economic/time costs. Recent Kaiser Permanente (KP) data confirmed all KP regions had implemented secure email functionality, with regional policies, workflows, and provider best practices established. High volume physicians were defined as 10-20 patient emails/day. We sought to quantify 6-month email experience of a sub-specialty urosurgeon, in an effort to understand socioeconomic impact. Email is not reimbursable in our area; patient care is fee-for-service.

**Methods:** A single surgeon, academic centre series of 2276 patient care related emails were catalogued at source after removing patient identifiers over a six-month period from March 1 to June 30, 2013, as well as

September 1 through October 31 2013 (183 days) to minimize June and July (summer slowdown) impact on data. Over the same study period, 1261 research-related emails were concurrently analyzed. Surgeon responses were collated. Time values were assigned to electronic interactions, and economic and time costs determined.

**Results:** An average of 12.4 emails/day (e/d) for patient care versus 6.89 research related comprise the data set. The top five e/d measures were for Peyronie's disease (5.8), post-RP erectile dysfunction (ED) (3.0), general ED (0.8), post-surgical procedure(0.3), and appointment/future care related (0.3). On average, time spent per week for patient care emails was 114 min (1.9 hrs), compared to 96 min for research related emails (independent of time spent on grants, etc). Over the course of a calendar year, the financial impact based on \$100,250, and 300/h values for emails are \$9880,24700, and 29640. Time costs approached 99 hours/52 weeks.

**Conclusions:** Email has been shown to meaningfully improve patient perception of care; lost financial opportunities are significant. Compensation guidelines should be established.