

Computers

Making progress



NOEL STEWART is the information management program officer for the North East Valley Division of General Practice, Melbourne.

Use the 'Progress Notes' function to its full advantage.

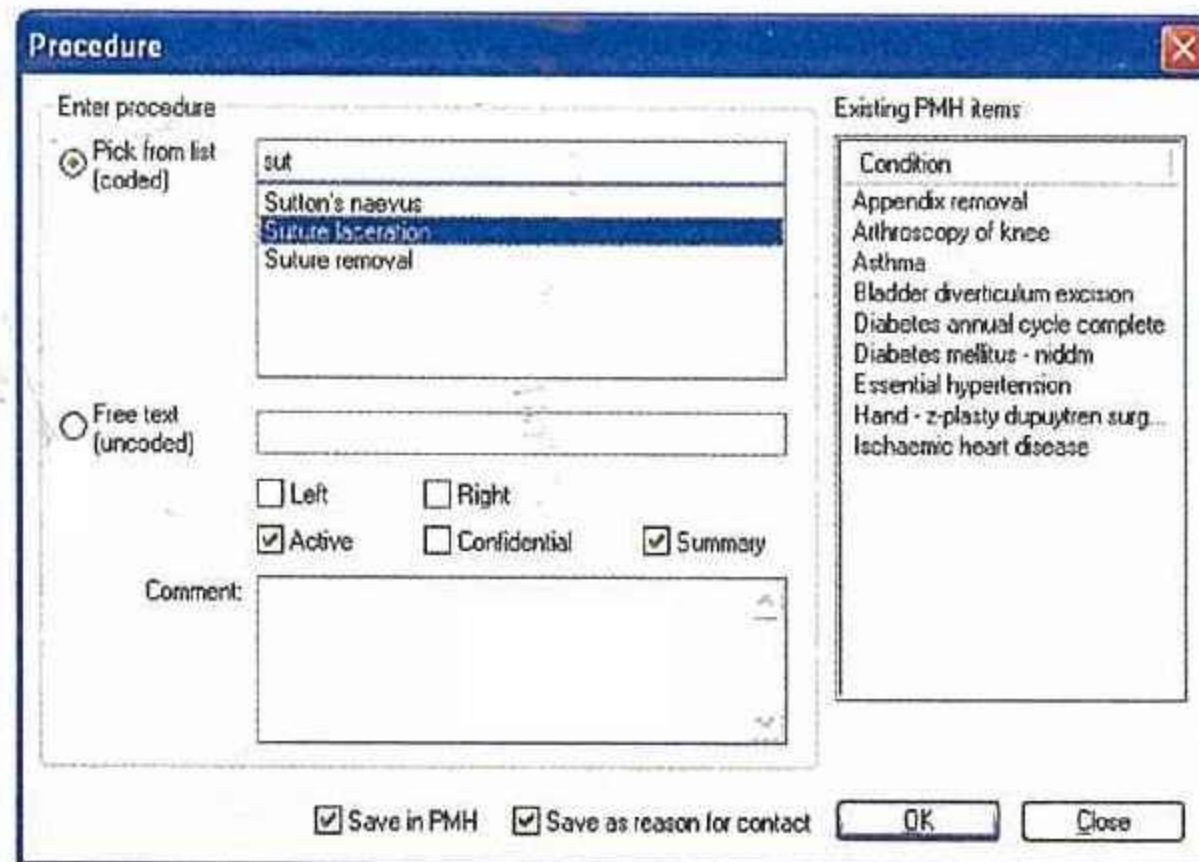
MOST actions performed in clinical software programs are automatically recorded into the Progress Notes.

Yet many GPs still keep a written record of their actions, which is doubling up. Other GPs make a note such as "refer MD" in their written notes when the actions are recorded in the software.

Two under-used tools of the Progress Notes are the 'Search' function and 'Procedure' tab.

Search allows you to do a keyword search of all your progress notes. All visits that contain that word or phrase will turn red, allowing you to read only those notes relevant to your particular search.

The 'Procedure' button works with the same database as the 'Reason' button. Enter the first few

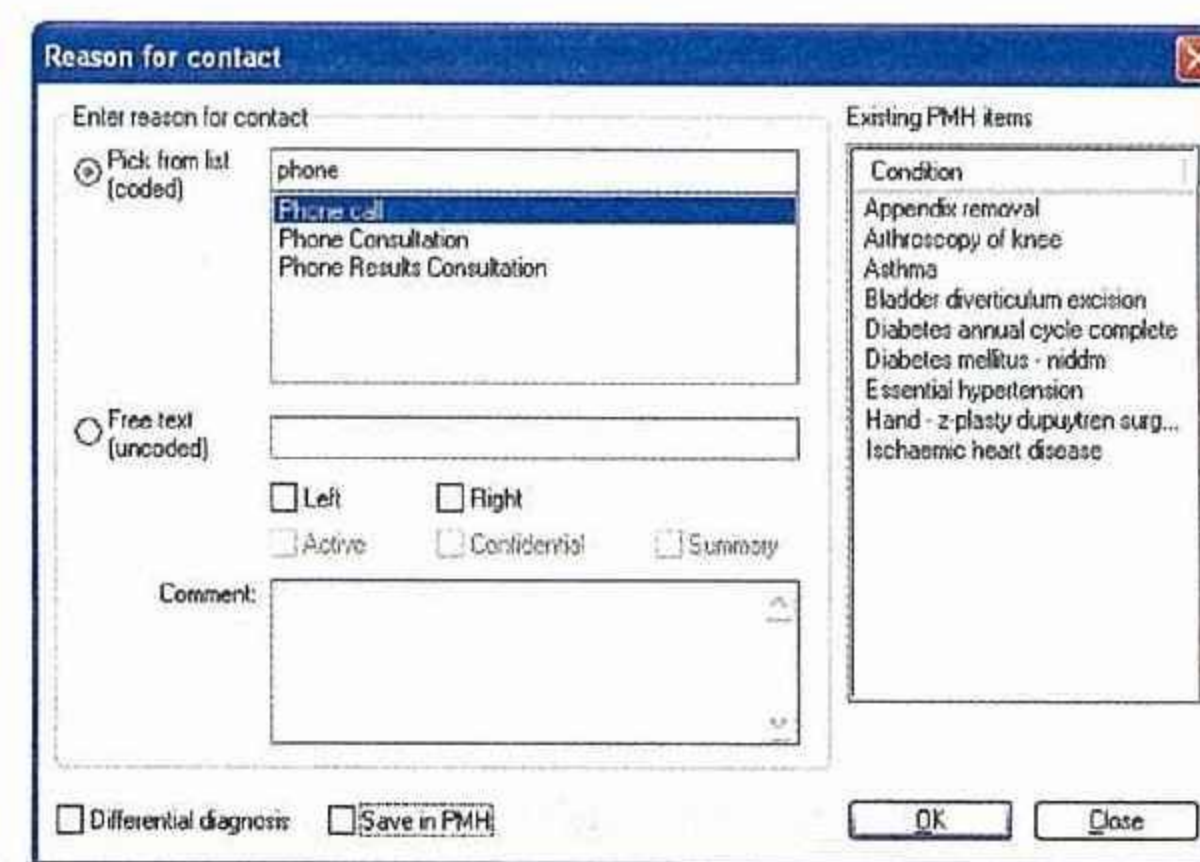


Use the Procedure tab to record procedures.

letters (eg, 'sut'), and select from the pick list. You have the choice of a coded or free text (uncoded) selection (see photo, above left).

The advantage of the 'Procedure' button is that it works in the same way as the 'Reason' or 'Reason for Prescription' windows. The selected procedure can be added to the patient's history ('Save in PMH') and also as the reason for contact.

An accreditation requirement is that all contacts with patients including phone calls should be recorded. This is easy when using



Use the Reason tab to record patient phone contact.

the 'Reason' button in Progress Notes (or 'Reason for Prescription' when prescribing). Type in 'Phone' and then select 'Phone Consultation' or 'Phone Results Consultation' from the pick list (see photo, above right).

Other useful contact reasons relate to item numbers. By typing in 'GP' you are given a choice of 'GP Management Plan — Preparation (721)' or 'GP Management Plan — Review (725)', or by typing in 'TCA' you are given TCA (Team Care Arrangement). You can record the item numbers as the reason for

contact and these are searchable using the patient database search. The same applies to 'Health Assessment (item 700)', the '45 Health Check (item 717)' and 'Refugee Health Assessment (item 714, 716)'.

The 'Reason' tab allows you to add a differential diagnosis. Add the condition you think the patient may have from either the pick list (preferable) or free text and place a tick in the 'Differential Diagnosis' box, then click 'OK'. A diagnosis with a '?' before it will appear in the Progress Notes (eg, ?parkinsons).

Automatic additions

Medical Director actions and recordings that are automatically transferred to the progress notes.

Actions

- Prescribing
- Pathology/cytology/imaging requests
- Notifying pathology results
- Recalls
- Referrals and correspondence created in LetterWriter
- Travel schedules
- Education leaflets printed
- Printing Asthma Action Plan
- Blood glucose

Recordings

- Height/weight/waist/BMI
- Blood pressure
- Immunisations
- Gestational record
- Respiratory function calculator and spirometry results
- Renal function calculator
- Physical activity assessment
- Depression scale
- Mini mental state examination