



NHS CENTRE FOR  
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Access to the Online Evidence Base  
A Survey of the Northern and  
Yorkshire Region



THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

REPORT 23



# **Access to the online evidence base**

**A Survey of the Northern and Yorkshire Region**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	2
Methods	3
General Practice Survey Results	5
PCG/T Survey Results	18
Discussion	20
Conclusions	22
References	23
Appendix 1: Search Strategies	24
Appendix 2: General Practice Survey Questionnaire	25
Appendix 3: PCG/T Survey Questionnaire	31
Appendix 4: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule	34
Appendix 5: Summary Transcripts of Interviews	35





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Aims:** To assess the awareness and use of NHSnet within general practice and to investigate the presence of skills necessary to maximise the benefits of NHSnet connections.

**Methods:** Postal questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews.

**Setting:** Primary care in Northern and Yorkshire Region.

**Participants:** General practice and Primary Care Trust staff.

**Results:** At least one completed questionnaire was obtained from 65% of the general practices surveyed, and the individual response rate to the general practice survey was 44%.

90% of all respondents reported that their practice was connected to NHSnet, with 59% of respondents reporting that they use NHSnet at least once a week. Whilst NHSnet is most commonly used to search for research information or guidance, all respondents in this survey still report greater access to and use of paper-based information resources.

**Conclusions:** Since our 1999 survey, reported NHSnet connectivity has increased greatly, with a majority of respondents reporting that they use NHSnet at least once a week. Given the recent implementation of NHSnet and the developing (ie early) stage of some online resources, this level uptake is encouraging.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1999, the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) undertook a study, funded by NHS Northern and Yorkshire Region, to explore access to the electronic evidence base in general practice in the Northern and Yorkshire region. The study found that general practices seemed to be struggling to set up the infrastructure and to develop the skills that are necessary to access available research evidence.<sup>1</sup> Just under 60% of all respondents reported having no access to the NHS net and just under 50% also reported having no access to the internet. All respondents in this survey reported greater access to paper-based information than electronic databases. The research also provided some evidence of differential access to information resources between different professions in general practice. GPs clearly had easier access than other professions to both paper-based resources and electronic databases.

In 2001, the NHS Information Authority and the NHS Northern and Yorkshire Region approached the project team to ask them to undertake a follow-up study. This follow-up study was to assess improvements in the Northern and Yorkshire region against the 1999 baseline, and to provide insights into how the recent information developments arising from the Project Connect programme were taking effect in general practice. To assess the extent of changes the study had the following primary objectives:

- To assess the number of practices with NHSnet connections.
- To describe the awareness of NHSnet within practices and to investigate the presence of skills necessary to maximise the benefits of NHSnet connections.
- To assess levels of use of online resources, including evidence based resources such as the National Electronic Library for Health (NeLH) and clinical and non-clinical messaging.

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## METHODS

This study used two primary means of data collection – postal survey questionnaires and follow up semi-structured interviews with selected survey respondents.

Prior to the commencement of the surveys, a literature search was undertaken to identify recent and ongoing published and unpublished reports of surveys of primary care computing and access to the evidence. Relevant information was used to provide contextual background for the proposed research, to indicate potential questions to include within the surveys and to identify other survey results against which to compare the findings of this research.

The following databases were searched: the HMIC cd-rom, MEDLINE, EMBASE, the National Research Register, CINAHL and the British Nursing Index. Details of the search strategies employed can be found in Appendix 1.

### *General practice postal survey*

The general practice postal survey questionnaire was designed with reference to both the questions contained in the previous survey instrument,<sup>1</sup> to allow the measurement of any changes from that baseline, and to other existing survey instruments.<sup>2-4</sup> Topic areas covered in the questionnaire included background information on the respondent and their general practice; levels of access to information resources; training and support mechanisms; self-reported use of available resources and facilities; potential improvements to existing infrastructure.

The questionnaire was developed by the project team and took account of comments from the commissioners of the study. The questionnaire was extensively peer-reviewed, and minor changes were made in light of peer reviewers comments. A copy of the final questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.

General practices in Northern and Yorkshire Region were identified using an electronic database.<sup>5</sup> Three copies of questionnaires and three copies of the letters of instruction were posted directly to every Practice Manager in the Region. The Practice Manager was asked in a covering letter to complete one questionnaire themselves and to distribute the others to one GP and one practice nurse (or nurse practitioner) in the practice.

Each questionnaire was issued with a freepost envelope to encourage response and respondents were asked to return the questionnaire in the envelope provided. This was to ensure minimum administration by the Practice Manager. Questionnaires and letters were distributed during July 2001. Three reminder letters were distributed to practice managers in August, September and October 2001.

As incentives are generally an effective means of increasing response rates,<sup>6</sup> a prize draw involving book vouchers of £100, £50 and £25, was offered as a further incentive to practices to respond to the survey. To gain entry to the prize draw, all three questionnaires had to be completed and returned.

Data were entered onto a spreadsheet and analysed using SPSS 10. Simple descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' reported awareness, access and use of NHSnet and a number of information resources. Free text answers given by respondents to open-ended questions were categorized according to subject and the frequencies of responses were calculated. Responses to the general practice survey were also assessed against the 1999 baseline, with particular attention given to describing levels of access to and use of NHSnet.

### *Semi-structured interviews with responding general practices*

Semi-structured interviews with a small selection of responding practices were undertaken. The selection of interviewees was made according to pre-determined criteria set by the project team and the commissioners of the study. It was proposed that nine interviews should be performed with those practices that had that returned all three questionnaires. Selection

for interview was determined by survey responses and by type, size and/ or location of general practice. The following matrix was used to select the nine practices for interview:

- Urban practices - 1 small practice, 1 large practice, 1 training practice
- Mixed practices - 1 small practice, 1 large practice, 1 training practice
- Rural practices - 1 small practice, 1 large practice, 1 training practice

A small practice was defined as one that has a patient list of less than 5,000 patients. A large practice was defined as one that has a patient list of more than 10,000 patients.

In addition, a further three practices where only the practice manager had responded were selected for interview.

An interview schedule (Appendix 3) was prepared in advance and used for all 12 interviews. The interviews discussed the use of NHSnet by practice staff, current barriers to efficient use of the existing infrastructure, and any outstanding training needs.

#### *PCG/T postal survey*

The purpose of the postal survey questionnaire to PCG/Ts was to establish what (if any) training and / or infrastructure had been provided to assist general practice staff to access, and make use of, the evidence base. Once again the postal survey questionnaire was designed with reference to the questions contained in the previous survey instruments.<sup>1,3</sup> The questionnaire was developed by the project team and took account of comments from the commissioners of the study. The questionnaire was extensively peer-reviewed, and minor amendments were subsequently made. A copy of the final questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4.

All Chief Executives of PCG/Ts in the Northern and Yorkshire Region were identified using an electronic database.<sup>7</sup> The Chief Executive of each PCG/T was contacted and was asked to pass the questionnaire to the most appropriate person within the PCG/T for completion. We suggested either the person with responsibility for IT or clinical governance. Each questionnaire was issued with a freepost envelope to encourage response. Questionnaires and letters were distributed during November 2001. Two reminder letters were sent out in November and December 2001.

Data were entered onto a spreadsheet and analysed using SPSS 10. Simple descriptive statistics were used to summarise responses. Free text answers given by respondents to open-ended questions were categorised according to subject and the frequencies calculated. Particular attention was given to describing the extent of any PCG/T monitoring of the use of NHSnet and to PCG/T investment in training for general practice staff.

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## GENERAL PRACTICE SURVEY RESULTS

Of the 1042 general practices identified in the Northern and Yorkshire Region, 12 practices returned the questionnaires and said that they did not want to participate in the survey.

Of the remaining practices 65% (670/1030) returned questionnaires. 198 of the responding practices completed and returned all three questionnaires. The remainder returned one or two completed questionnaires.

3090 individuals were invited through their general practices to reply to the questionnaire. 44% (1364/3090) of these individuals responded.

### *Respondent characteristics*

Of the 1364 respondents, 32% (n=441) indicated that they were GPs, 24% (n=325) indicated they were practice nurses/nurse practitioners, and 41% (n=556) reported that they were practice managers. A further 2% (n=33) were 'other practice staff'. Nine respondents did not indicate their job designation.

76% (n=333) of GP respondents were male whilst 99% (n=321) of practice nurses and 86% (n=474) of practice managers were female. Around a third (32%, n=436) of all respondents stated that they were from GP training practices.

Around three-quarters (78%, n=1067) of survey respondents had access to the internet in their own homes. Home access was highest for GPs (90%, n=394), followed by practice nurses (77%, n=251) and practice managers (71%, n=395).

The following section summarises the responses from all respondents and where appropriate highlights differences in the frequency of responses between GPs, practice nurses and practice managers. Where relevant the results of the 1999<sup>1</sup> and 2001 surveys will be compared. As there were no significant differences found in the frequency of responses between training and non-training practices, these will not be summarised.

## **ACCESS TO INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Access to computer equipment**

Respondents were asked to state whether they had any access to a PC, with a cd-rom attached, in their general practice/health centre. 94% (n=1282) of all respondents reported having access to a PC, with a cd-rom attached. Table 1 shows that reported levels of easy access (in own office/consulting room) had increased for all groups since the 1999 survey.

### **Access to the internet**

In 1999, 47% (n=666) of all respondents reported having no access to the internet, whilst 15% (n=209) said they had easy access (in own office/consulting room). GPs reported the highest levels of easy access (22%, n=113) to the internet. By 2001, the percentage of all respondents that reported having no access had fallen to 3% (n=41). The highest levels of easy access were reported by practice managers (88%, n=487), followed by GPs (81%, n=358) and practice nurses (64%, n=207).

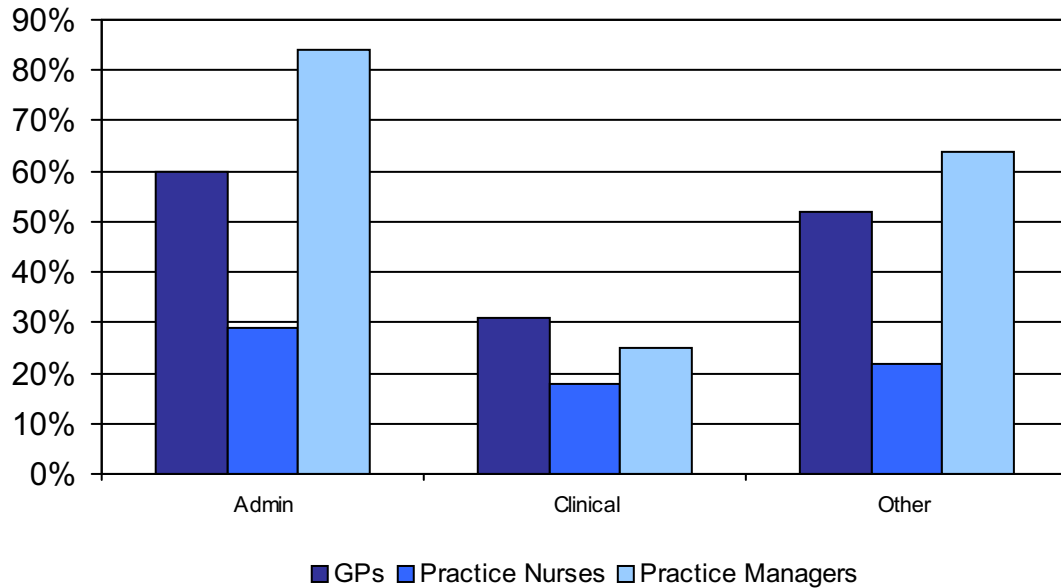
90% (n=1227) of all respondents reported that their practice was connected to NHSnet. Around 4% (n=61) of all respondents stated that their practice was not connected whilst a further 4% (n=56) were unsure. Table 2 shows that 2001 survey respondents report levels of easy access to NHSnet (in own office/consulting room) that are far greater than in the 1999 survey.

## **USE OF THE NHSNET**

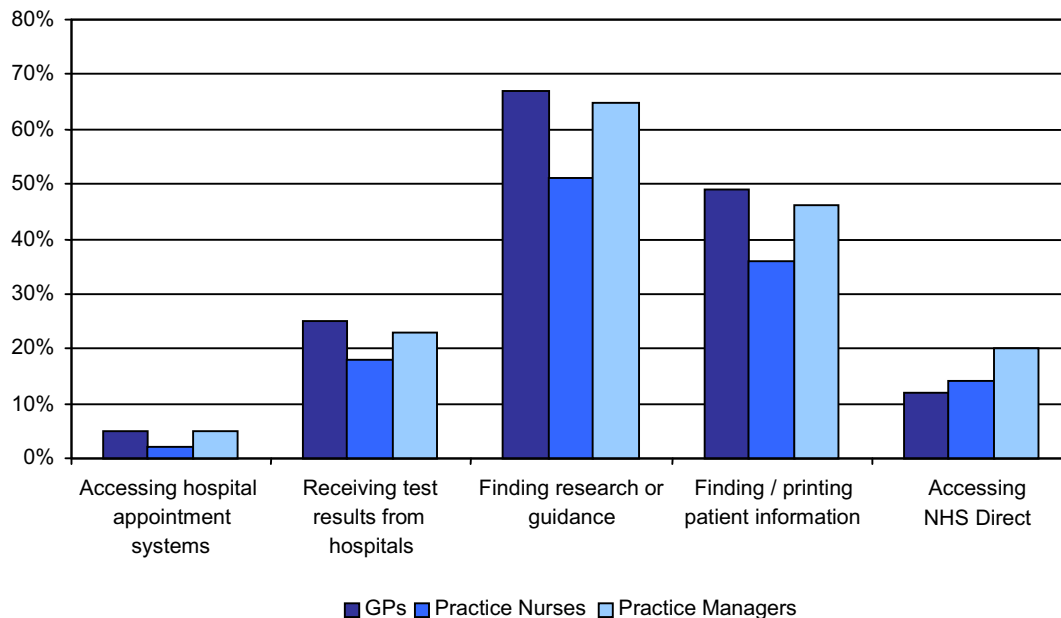
Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they used their NHSnet connection. After excluding those respondents (n=61) who had previously stated that their practice was not connected to NHSnet, 59% (n=774) of the remaining respondents reported using NHSnet at least once a week. Table 3 provides a breakdown of reported usage by GPs, practice nurses and practice managers.

### Using NHSnet to send email

After excluding those respondents (n=61) who had previously stated that their practice was not connected to NHSnet, the remaining respondents were asked about their use of email. Figure 1 illustrates reported use of email for administrative, clinical and other purposes, whilst a full breakdown is provided in Table 4. Figure 2 shows how GPs, practice nurses and practice managers report use of NHSnet for a range of activities.



**Figure 1: Use of email**



**Figure 2: Use of NHS net**

### **Using NHSnet to access hospital appointment systems**

Respondents were asked if they had ever used NHSnet to access hospital appointment systems. 79% (n=1024) of those respondents with an NHSnet connection stated that they had never accessed hospital appointment systems. A further 1% (n=13) stated that they accessed hospital appointment systems regularly whilst just under 3% (n=33) reported that they did so occasionally. Table 5 shows reported usage by GPs, practice nurses and practice managers.

### **Receiving test results via NHSnet**

18% (n=236) of those respondents with an NHSnet connection stated that they were regularly receiving test results from hospitals electronically. A further 50 (4%) respondents stated that they were doing so occasionally. A majority of respondents (n=798) had never received tests results electronically. Table 6 shows receipt of test results by professional group.

### **Using NHSnet to find research or guidance**

A majority of respondents stated that they were using NHSnet to find research information or guidance. 25% (n=321) of respondents reported that they were searching regularly whilst a further 37% (n=480) said that they were doing so occasionally. Table 7 shows the frequency with which responding GPs, practice nurses and practice managers reported using NHSnet to find research or guidance.

### **Using NHSnet to find patient information**

Respondents were asked if they ever used NHSnet to find/print patient information. 16% (n=212) of those respondents with an NHSnet connection stated that they regularly used NHSnet to find/print patient information, whilst 28% (n=359) stated that they did so occasionally. A further 41% (n=535) stated that they had never used NHSnet to find/print patient information. Table 8 shows reported usage by GPs, practice nurses and practice managers.

### **Using NHSnet to access NHS Direct**

Respondents were asked if they ever used NHSnet to access the website NHS Direct Online. Around two-thirds (n=890) of those respondents with an NHSnet connection stated that they had never used NHSnet to access NHS Direct. A further 5% (n=66) stated that they did so regularly, whilst 11% (n=139) stated that they did so occasionally. Table 9 shows reported usage by professional group.

### **Using NHSnet: Training**

Respondents were asked if they had received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet. Half (n=652) of those respondents with an NHSnet connection stated that they had received training/guidance on using NHSnet, 32% (n=416) stated that they had not, with a further 7% (n=87) who were not sure. Two thirds of practice managers stated that they had received training whereas 40% of GPs and a third of practice nurses stated that they had received training (see Table 10).

### **Using NHSnet: The practice policy**

After excluding those (n=61) who had previously stated that their practice was not connected to NHSnet, the remaining respondents were asked to state whether their practice had discussed the use of NHSnet at staff meetings. 45% (n= 585) stated that they had done so, 39% (n=511) stated that they had not, whilst a further 7% (n=89) were not sure.

A minority (15%, n=199) of those respondents with an NHSnet connection stated that their practice had produced a policy on work-based usage of NHSnet. A further two-thirds (n=851) indicated that their practice did not have a policy, whilst 8% (n=100) were not sure.

### **Reasons for not using or rarely using NHSnet**

Respondents were asked to give any reasons why they never or rarely made use of the NHSnet connection. Just over a third of those respondents (457/1303) took the opportunity to explain why they made limited use of the NHSnet connection. The following are the main reasons given coupled with a selection of some of the comments (in italics) made by respondents.

## Reasons given for not using or rarely using NHSnet

### Lack of time (n=136)

- *Usually too busy and occupied with other tasks.*
- *Biggest problem remains lack of time in the working day.*
- *Haven't got time, too busy doing other things.*
- *Lack of time, the working day is already too full.*
- *Lack of time to fully explore computer functions other than consultations.*
- *No time to do so, had training before we had access and would need time to play around with it in order to find way around, too busy at moment.*
- *No time to look around it + find out exactly what is available and where.*
- *No time, the searches take too long.*
- *No time, too long to find useful info.*
- *No time, clinical work pressures.*
- *No time, search for evidence @ home.*
- *Time constraints of busy practice, no free time to search net for info at work*
- *Time constraints & the length of time it would take during a consultation*

### Don't know how to use it / Not confident / need training (n=126)

- *At present used very little - overall training required for best usage and benefits to practice.*
- *Don't have much training therefore don't feel confident, no chance to discover.*
- *GP's do not use it, as they have very poor computer knowledge & skills.*
- *I do not feel confident using it.*
- *Never been shown how.*
- *Training not good enough, more important ways to communicating which I have used for years!*
- *Training was done so long ago that we need a refresher course.*
- *Totally devoid of any training whatsoever, no time.*
- *Unsure of how to use it. I would be delighted to use it if I knew how.*
- *Uncertainty of use.*
- *Lack of training & info during initial installation.*
- *Lack of training to use it, no knowledge of the information available.*

### Only just installed (n=39)

- *Newly installed-first getting to know the system*
- *Only recently connected*
- *Only recently got access. Haven't had any time to sit down and try & sort it*
- *Only recently installed in our surgeries, therefore system not in full use.*
- *Only recently working and could do with update/training*
- *Only recently connected and therefore not had much time to get used to it*

### Not useful / not needed for work purposes (n=27)

- *Access to hospital not yet up and running for lab results.*
- *Awaiting links with hospital path lab, otherwise it's not essential for work purposes.*
- *Alternative sources of information available. Nothing interesting*
- *Alternative sources of information available.*
- *Does not appear helpful: day to day practice.*
- *GPs decided nurses didn't need it for work purposes.*
- *I find I can obtain the information I require for my patients through other means.*
- *I have to come out of clinical system to use it. Not had the need.*
- *It is just another source of information. Would use it if I couldn't find info anywhere else easier.*
- *Not needed yet, time consuming during consultations.*

### Problems with connection & software (n=20)

- *Computer crashes as soon as I try & no response to request to fix problem by suppliers.*
- *Connection faulty & don't feel confident.*



- Its incredibly unreliable in early days.
- IT does not work very well. I have had health authority staff out to it, but we cannot access it.
- NHS net cumbersome and unreliable.
- Problems with installation - not always accessible.
- The connection from the PC in my room is faulty - Torex blame cabling and vice versa, therefore I have to use another PC in the building.
- Would use it more but sometimes cannot go onto NHSnet. Engineer says it may be too many users trying.

Too busy seeing patients (n=13)

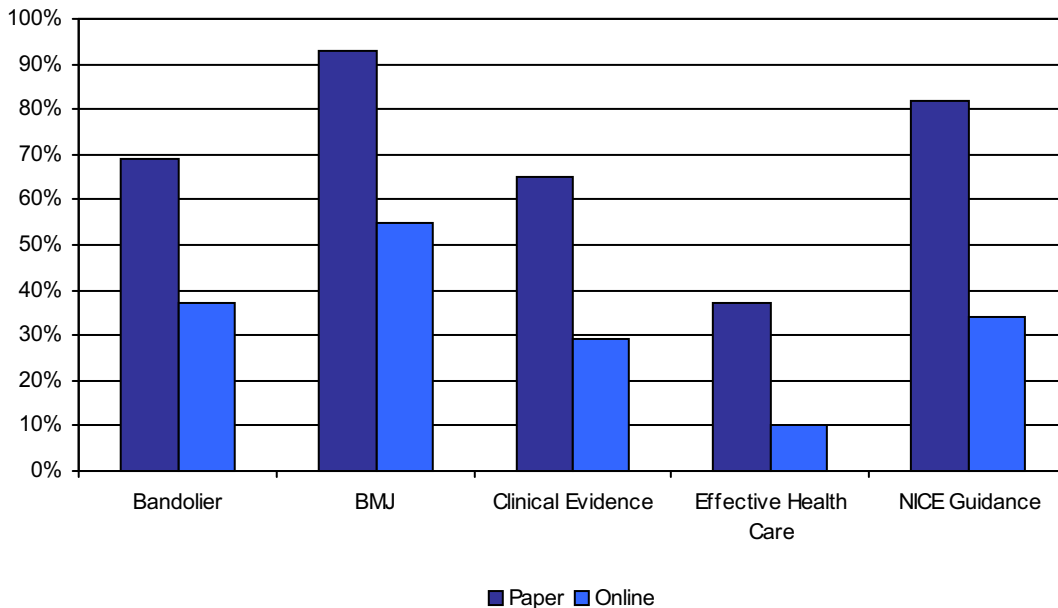
- Too busy with patients to access data.
- Too busy with patients and paperwork.
- I always seem to be too busy seeing patients.

Email unreliable (n=7)

- Doesn't always work! Cumbria Practices seem to have a problem regarding emailing facilities.
- Do use it but e-mail unreliable.
- X-400: the email address is very difficult to set up.

### USING ONLINE AND PAPER SOURCES OF RESEARCH INFORMATION

Respondents were asked to state which online and paper-based resources they used. Figure 3 shows that GPs report are twice as likely to use a selection of paper resources compared with their online equivalents.

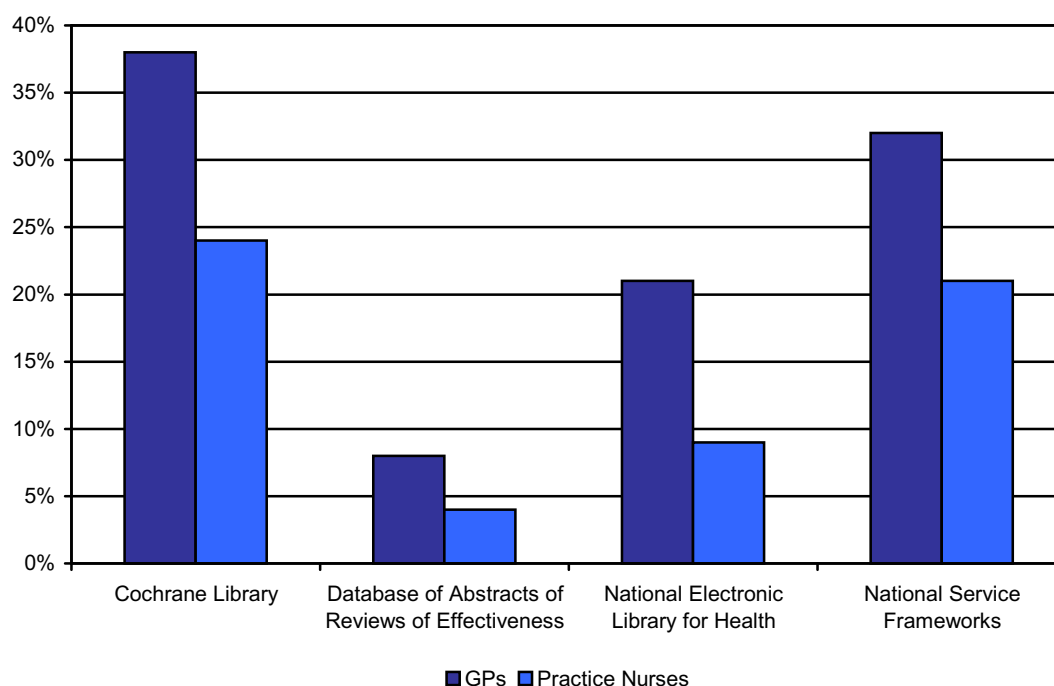


**Figure 3: GPs use of selected online and paper resources**

Tables 11-15 show respondents use of a selection of online and paper resources. For comparative purposes, the online and paper versions of each information resource are shown together.

### Using other online sources of research information

Figure 4 shows responding GPs and practice nurses reported use of a selection of other online and resources.



**Figure 4: use of selected online resources**

Tables 16-19 show responding GPs, practice nurses and practice managers regular and occasional use of a selection of research resources that are available online.

### Using other paper sources of research information

Respondents were also asked to state which other paper-based resources they used. Tables 20-24 show responding GPs, practice nurses and practice managers regular and occasional use of a selection of research publications.

25% (n=361) of all respondents also reported regularly referring to a number of paper-based resources other than those listed previously. These additional publications included: *Community Nurse* (n=41), *GP Magazine* (n=19) *Health Service Journal* (n=18), *Medeconomics* (n=34) *Practice Nurse* (n=141), *Practice Nursing* (n=46) *Practice Manager* (n=22) *Primary Care Management* (n=14) and *Pulse* (n=31).

### TRAINING

Respondents were asked if they had received any skills training (in the last 12 months) in a number of computer-related activities. 44% (n=604/1364) of all respondents stated that they had received training on how to use NHSnet. Around half of all respondents stated they had received training in either general computer skills (n=677/1364) or in using computer-based administration systems such as EMIS (n=721/1364).

43% (n=587/1364) of all respondents reported that they had received training on how to search the internet, whilst 13% (n=183/1364) and 8% (n=114/1364) stated that they had received training on how to search *MEDLINE* and *The Cochrane Library* respectively. Around 10% (n=131/1364) of all respondents reported having had training on how to use research evidence, and around 12% (n=158/1364) stated that they had received critical appraisal skills training.

Tables 25-30 show reported levels of training received on how to use NHSnet, the internet, database searching and how to use research evidence.

### Outstanding training requirements

Respondents were asked to state if they had any outstanding training requirements. 21% (n=294/1364) of all respondents stated that they had no outstanding training requirements. 20% (n=90) of GPs, 12% (n=39) of practice nurses and 28% (n=154) of practice managers reported no outstanding training requirements. Figure 5 shows the outstanding training requirements reported by GPs, practice nurses and practice managers.

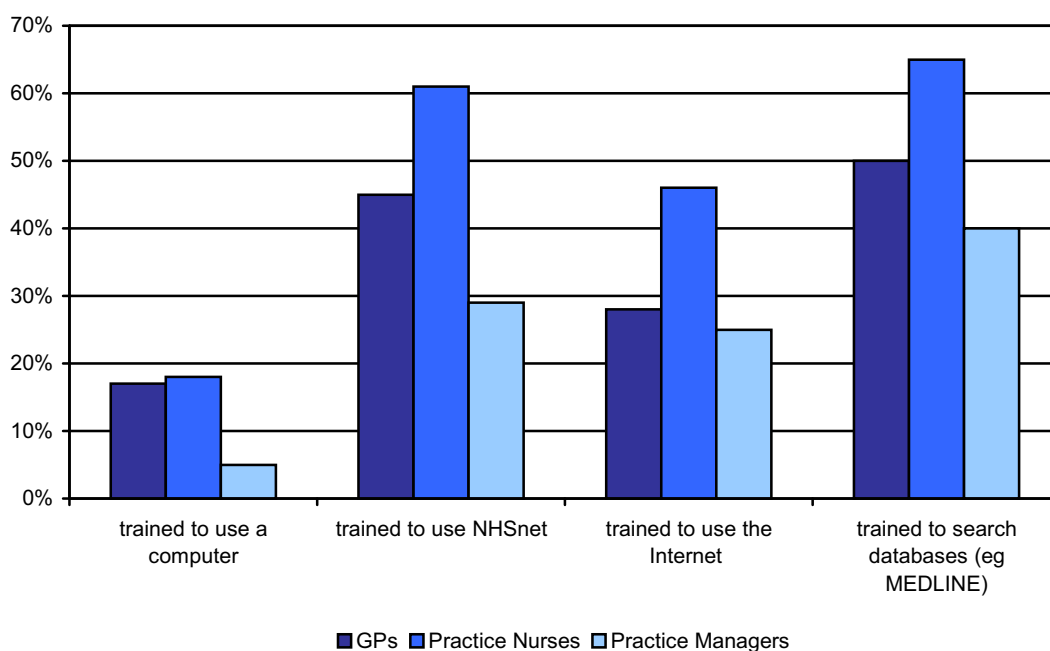


Figure 5: Outstanding training requirements

### Access to library services

In both the 1999 and 2001 surveys, respondents were asked if they had access to a librarian (or other professional) who could undertake literature searches on request. In 2001, 36% (n=485/1364) of all respondents stated that they did have access to a librarian, 49% (n=674/1364) stated that they did not have access, whilst a further 11% (n=153/1364) were not sure. 43% (n=191) of GPs, 42% (n=138) of practice nurses and 26% (n=147) of practice managers stated they had access to such a service. Of those respondents who stated that they had access to a librarian (n=485), 55% (n=267/485) stated that their local hospital was their main library location.

In 1999, 53% (n=744) of all respondents reported having access to a librarian (or other professional) who could undertake literature searches on request. 59% (n=296) of GPs and 49% (n=169) of practice nurses stated they had access to such a service. 76% (n=566) of the 744 respondents who indicated that they had access to a librarian stated that their local hospital was their main library location.

### Semi-structured Interviews with selected responding practices

A small sample of practices that had responded to the survey were contacted and asked to provide some additional detail on practice staff's access to, use of, and the provision of training to make best use of NHSnet. Twelve practices (out of 18 contacted) agreed to provide additional information. A summary transcript for each of the interviews can be found in Appendix 5.

## General practice survey results tables

<b>Table 1: Access to a PC with a cd-rom</b>		
	Easy access	
	1999	2001
GPs	59% (n=297)	92% (n=404)
Practice nurses	39% (n=135)	73% (n=236)
Practice managers	71% (n=163)	94% (n=523)

<b>Table 2: Access to the NHSnet</b>		
	Easy access	
	1999	2001
GPs	12% (n=61)	82% (n=360)
Practice nurses	15% (n=35)	65% (n=210)
Practice managers	15% (n=35)	90% (n=501)
All respondents	9% (n=134)	81% (n=1104)

<b>Table 3: Frequency of use of NHSnet*</b>						
	hourly	daily	weekly	rarely	never	no response
GPs	4% (n=17)	37% (n=155)	22% (n=92)	19% (n=78)	11% (n=45)	7% (n=27)
Practice nurses	<1% (n=2)	9% (n=29)	25% (n=78)	33% (n=104)	16% (n=51)	15% (n=47)
Practice managers	6% (n=30)	44% (n=234)	21% (n=114)	20% (n=106)	3% (n=17)	6% (n=35)

\*Excludes respondents who stated that their practice was not connected to NHSnet.

<b>Table 4: Use of email*</b>			
	Using email	No, never	no response
<b>Admin purposes</b>			
GPs	60% (n=247)	32% (n=134)	8% (n=33)
Practice nurses	29% (n=90)	47% (n=146)	24% (n=75)
Practice managers	84% (n=449)	8% (n=45)	8% (n=42)
<b>Clinical purposes</b>			
GPs	31% (n=127)	59% (n=243)	11% (44)
Practice nurses	18% (n=58)	54% (n=167)	28% (n=86)
Practice managers	25% (n=135)	54% (n=291)	21% (n=110)
<b>Other purposes</b>			
GPs	52% (n=219)	38% (n=156)	9% (n=39)
Practice nurses	22% (n=70)	49% (n=152)	29% (n=89)
Practice managers	64% (n=341)	19% (n=104)	17% (n=91)

\*Excludes respondents who stated that their practice was not connected to NHSnet.

<b>Table 5: Accessing hospital appointment systems*</b>			
	yes	no, never	no response
GPs	4% (n=16)	87% (n=359)	9% (n=39)
Practice nurses	<2% (n=5)	69% (n=215)	29% (n=91)
Practice managers	5% (n=25)	77% (n=415)	18% (n=96)

\*Excludes respondents who stated that their practice was not connected to NHSnet.

<b>Table 6: Receiving test results from hospitals*</b>			
	yes	no, never	no response
GPs	25% (n=101)	66% (n=275)	9% (n=38)
Practice nurses	18% (n=56)	53% (n=166)	29% (n=89)
Practice managers	23% (n=124)	61% (n=327)	16% (n=85)

\*Excludes respondents who stated that their practice was not connected to NHSnet.

<b>Table 7: Finding research or guidance*</b>			
	yes	no, never	no response
GPs	67% (n=276)	26% (n=107)	7% (n=31)
Practice nurses	51% (n=158)	28% (n=86)	21% (n=67)
Practice managers	65% (n=347)	24% (n=127)	12% (n=62)

\*Excludes respondents who stated that their practice was not connected to NHSnet.

<b>Table 8: Finding/printing patient information*</b>			
	yes	no, never	no response
GPs	49% (n=201)	43% (n=179)	8% (n=34)
Practice nurses	36% (n=113)	38% (n=119)	25% (n=79)
Practice managers	46% (n=245)	40% (n=215)	14% (n=76)

\*Excludes respondents who stated that their practice was not connected to NHSnet.

<b>Table 9: Accessing NHS Direct Online*</b>			
	yes	no, never	no response
GPs	11% (n=47)	80% (n=331)	9% (n=36)
Practice nurses	14% (n=43)	58% (n=180)	28% (n=88)
Practice managers	20% (n=107)	66% (n=352)	14% (n=77)

\*Excludes respondents who stated that their practice was not connected to NHSnet.

<b>Table 10: Have you received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet*</b>				
	yes	no	not sure	no response
GPs	40% (n=164)	44% (n=184)	8% (n=33)	8% (n=33)
Practice nurses	34% (n=106)	35% (n=108)	13% (n=40)	18% (n=57)
Practice managers	67% (n=361)	21% (n=113)	2% (n=11)	10% (n=51)

\*Excludes respondents who stated that their practice was not connected to NHSnet.

<b>Table 11: Respondents use of Bandolier</b>		
	use online	use paper
GPs	37% (n=161)	69% (n=304)
Practice nurses	11% (n=34)	7% (n=23)
Practice managers	8% (n=44)	5% (n=29)

<b>Table 12: Respondents use of BMJ</b>		
	use online	use paper
GPs	55% (n=242)	93% (n=408)
Practice nurses	26% (n=85)	72% (n=234)
Practice managers	25% (n=139)	54% (n=302)

<b>Table 13: Respondents use of Clinical Evidence</b>		
	use online	use paper
GPs	29% (n=133)	65% (n=290)
Practice nurses	17% (n=58)	38% (n=125)
Practice managers	15% (n=84)	20% (n=112)

<b>Table 14: Respondents use of Effective Health Care</b>		
	use online	use paper
GPs	10% (n=42)	37% (n=163)
Practice nurses	7% (n=25)	23% (n=73)
Practice managers	7% (n=38)	18% (n=99)

<b>Table 15: Respondents use of NICE Guidance</b>		
	use online	use paper
GPs	32% (n=142)	82% (n=363)
Practice nurses	21% (n=68)	55% (n=178)
Practice managers	29% (n=162)	35% (n=197)

<b>Table 16: Respondents use of Cochrane Library</b>				
	refer to	aware of but never used	never heard of	no response
GPs	38% (n=168)	43% (n=190)	11% (n=50)	7% (n=33)
Practice nurses	24% (n=76)	32% (n=105)	29% (n=95)	15% (n=49)
Practice managers	10% (n=57)	42% (n=235)	27% (n=154)	20% (n=110)

<b>Table 17: Respondents use of Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effectiveness (DARE)</b>				
	refer to	aware of but never used	never heard of	no response
GPs	8% (n=36)	27% (n=120)	55% (n=241)	10% (n=44)
Practice nurses	4% (n=13)	22% (n=72)	53% (n=171)	21% (n=69)
Practice managers	3% (n=14)	31% (n=171)	44% (n=243)	23% (n=128)

<b>Table 18: Respondents use of National electronic library for health (NeLH)</b>				
	refer to	aware of but never used	never heard of	no response
GPs	21% (n=93)	37% (n=162)	32% (n=141)	10% (n=44)
Practice nurses	9% (n=29)	32% (n=105)	37% (n=119)	22% (n=72)
Practice managers	12% (n=68)	44% (n=242)	23% (n=128)	21% (n=117)

<b>Table 19: Respondents use of National Service Frameworks</b>				
	refer to	aware of but never used	never heard of	no response
GPs	32% (n=144)	37% (n=162)	32% (n=141)	10% (n=44)
Practice nurses	21% (n=69)	32% (n=105)	37% (n=119)	22% (n=72)
Practice managers	31% (n=230)	44% (n=242)	23% (n=128)	21% (n=117)

<b>Table 20: Respondents use of British Journal of General Practice</b>				
	refer to	aware of but never used	never heard of	no response
GPs	63% (n=280)	28% (n=125)	2% (n=9)	6% (n=28)
Practice nurses	37% (n=121)	25% (n=81)	9% (n=28)	29% (n=95)
Practice managers	22% (n=124)	42% (n=231)	7% (n=39)	29% (n=162)

<b>Table 21: Respondents use of Drug and Therapeutics bulletin</b>				
	refer to	aware of but never used	never heard of	no response
GPs	92% (n=405)	4% (n=17)	1% (n=4)	3% (n=15)
Practice nurses	51% (n=165)	15% (n=50)	8% (n=26)	26% (n=84)
Practice managers	37% (n=202)	35% (n=196)	5% (n=28)	23% (n=130)

<b>Table 22: Respondents use of Evidence Based Medicine</b>				
	refer to	aware of but never used	never heard of	no response
GPs	31% (n=138)	39% (n=171)	18% (n=78)	12% (n=54)
Practice nurses	21% (n=66)	34% (n=112)	14% (n=45)	31% (n=102)
Practice managers	13% (n=71)	44% (n=244)	14% (n=78)	29% (n=164)

<b>Table 23: Respondents use of Evidence Based Nursing</b>				
	refer to	aware of but never used	never heard of	no response
GPs	5% (n=24)	39% (n=171)	18% (n=78)	12% (n=54)
Practice nurses	42% (n=136)	34% (n=112)	14% (n=45)	31% (n=102)
Practice managers	10% (n=52)	44% (n=244)	14% (n=78)	29% (n=164)

<b>Table 24: Respondents use of Nursing Times</b>				
	refer to	aware of but never used	never heard of	no response
GPs	4% (n=18)	64% (n=280)	14% (n=61)	19% (n=82)
Practice nurses	70% (n=228)	11% (n=35)	3% (n=9)	16% (n=53)
Practice managers	12% (n=67)	49% (n=270)	7% (n=37)	33% (n=182)

<b>Table 25: Have you received training on how to use NHSnet ?</b>				
	yes	no	not sure	no response
GPs	34% (n=148)	62% (n=273)	<2% (n=7)	3% (n=13)
Practice nurses	31% (n=102)	55% (n=179)	3% (n=10)	11% (n=34)
Practice managers	60% (n=336)	23% (n=184)		7% (n=36)



<b>Table 26: Have you received training on how to search the internet ?</b>				
	yes	no	not sure	no response
GPs	32% (n=139)	64% (n=283)	1% (n=4)	3% (n=13)
Practice nurses	35% (n=115)	54% (n=175)	1% (n=3)	10% (n=32)
Practice managers	57% (n=317)	35% (n=198)	<1% (n=2)	7% (n=39)

<b>Table 27: Have you received training on how to search databases such as MEDLINE ?</b>				
	yes	no	not sure	no response
GPs	16% (n=69)	79% (n=348)	1% (n=5)	4% (n=19)
Practice nurses	19% (n=61)	66% (n=214)	<2% (n=5)	14% (n=45)
Practice managers	10% (n=53)	77% (n=427)	1% (n=5)	13% (n=71)

<b>Table 28: Have you received training on how to search The Cochrane Library ?</b>				
	yes	no	not sure	no response
GPs	10% (n=43)	85% (n=373)	1% (n=5)	4% (n=20)
Practice nurses	13% (n=43)	71% (n=229)	2% (n=7)	14% (n=46)
Practice managers	5% (n=26)	81% (n=452)	<1% (n=4)	13% (n=74)

<b>Table 29: Have you received training on how to use research evidence ?</b>				
	yes	no	not sure	no response
GPs	11% (n=48)	83% (n=364)	1% (n=5)	5% (n=24)
Practice nurses	18% (n=58)	65% (n=210)	<2% (n=5)	16% (n=52)
Practice managers	4% (n=24)	81% (n=449)	1% (n=5)	14% (n=78)

<b>Table 30: Have you received critical appraisal skills training ?</b>				
	yes	no	not sure	no response
GPs	12% (n=53)	81% (n=356)	<2% (n=7)	6% (n=25)
Practice nurses	11% (n=34)	71% (n=232)	1% (n=4)	17% (n=55)
Practice managers	12% (n=67)	74% (n=409)	<1% (n=4)	14% (n=76)

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## PCG/T SURVEY RESULTS

Of the 49 PCG/Ts identified in Northern and Yorkshire Region, 92% (46/49) returned questionnaires. Of the 46 responding PCG/Ts, only one returned a questionnaire and said that they did not want to participate in the survey.

Of the 45 survey respondents, ten indicated that they were clinical governance leads, eight were IM&T leads, eight were development managers, seven were information managers, five were chief executives/officers, one was a research fellow and one was a consultant in public health.

### **ABOUT THE PCG/T**

All survey respondents reported that the PCG/T headquarters was connected to NHSnet.

Nearly all (44/45) of the survey respondents stated that all PCG/T staff have easy access (in own office) to NHSnet. Whilst the majority (80%, n=36) stated that there was nothing to discourage staff at the PCG/T headquarters from accessing NHSnet, nine respondents mentioned discouraging factors (staff having a lack of time n=5, unreliable connectivity n=4, lack of training n=1).

### **ABOUT PRACTICES WITHIN THE PCG/T**

Only 18% (n=8) of survey respondents reported that the PCG/T was monitoring how the NHSnet is used by practices. 71% (n=32) stated that the PCG/T was not monitoring use, whilst the remaining five respondents were not sure. One respondent pointed out that the health authority was responsible for monitoring.

20% (n=9) of survey respondents stated that the PCG/T had produced a policy on how practices can make best use of NHSnet. Of the remaining respondents, 67% (n=30) stated the PCG/T had not produced a policy, whilst six were not sure. Four of these respondents indicated that the health authority had distributed connection packs to health authorities.

20% (n=9) of the survey respondents reported that all practices within the PCG/T had been satisfied with the level of communication and information from the NHSIA regarding the roll out of NHSnet. A further 22% (n=10) of respondents stated that most practices were satisfied, whilst 7% (n=3) stated that about half were satisfied. 16% (n=7) of respondents stated that few practices were satisfied. The remaining 35% (n=16) of respondents were not sure. Two respondents did mention that less than half of the practices would know about the NHSIA as most of the communication had been via the health Authority and the PCG/T

Only 13% (n=6) of respondents stated that the PCG/T had formally collected feedback from practices on how well the installation of NHSnet went. 66% (n=31) stated that the PCG/T had not collected feedback; the remaining eight respondents were not sure. Of those that stated that formal feedback had been collected, four stated that this feedback had not been passed on to the NHSIA whilst two were not sure.

Survey respondents were asked to state (from their own knowledge) whether there had been any major problems regarding the connection of practices within the PCG/T to NHSnet. Just over half (n=25) of respondents said there had not, 42% (n=19) said yes, there had been, whilst one respondent did not answer the question. Of those that said there had been major problems, four mentioned delays in installation, five mentioned problems with email, three reported server downtime as a problem and two reported unreliable connectivity.

### **TRAINING**

20% (n=9) of respondents stated that practices within the PCG/T had received guidance or training from the NHSIA on the various uses/ services of NHSnet. A further 40% (n=18) respondents stated that they had not received guidance or training from the NHSIA, whilst the remainder (n=17) were not sure. One respondent did not answer the question.

Table 32 outlines training arranged by the PCG/T for practice staff in the last 12 months (as reported by survey respondents)

Table 32: Type of training arranged by the PCT

	% of PCG/Ts	Number of PCG/Ts
Creating websites	7%	n=3
Critical appraisal skills	27%	n=12
Electronic communication (email)	84%	n=38
General computer skills	89%	n=40
Searching databases such as MEDLINE	44%	n=20
Searching the Cochrane Library	47%	n=21
Searching the Internet	69%	n=31
Using research evidence	33%	n=15
Using the National electronic Library for Health	27%	n=12
Using the NHSnet	62%	n=28

69% (n=31) of respondents stated that the PCG/T had its own website. 29% (n=13) of respondents stated that the PCG/T did not have a website, although four said that one was being developed. One respondent did not answer the question. All but one of those respondents that stated that the PCG/T had its own website, were able to give its address.

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## DISCUSSION

Although the individual response rate to the GP questionnaire was only 44% (45% in 1999), at least one completed questionnaire was obtained from 65% (70% in 1999) of all the practices surveyed. This suggests that the GP survey may still provide a reasonable insight into access to, and use of, NHSnet in the Northern and Yorkshire Region. In terms of the response rate to the PCG/T survey, 92% returned completed questionnaires.

When we originally surveyed the Northern and Yorkshire Region in 1999, general practices seemed to be struggling to set up the necessary infrastructure to make best use of available research evidence and other facilities offered by the internet.<sup>1</sup> Since then, reported NHSnet connectivity has increased greatly (from around 10% to 90%). This increase is almost certainly as a direct result of the implementation of the NHSIA Project Connect programme, the aim of which was to meet the target set out in the NHS Plan to connect all practices in England by the end of March 2002.<sup>8</sup> It may well be that connectivity is higher and closer to 100%, but it should be noted that our survey was only measuring perceived access rather than determining whether practices were actually connected.

Few respondents to the general practice survey have reported having problems with NHSnet. A small number have suggested that the X400 email addresses are difficult to set up and remember compared with other email addresses. A small number of respondents have mentioned experiencing problems with the NHSnet connection itself and/or the practice computer systems upon which NHSnet operates. Overall, having a 'lack of time', not receiving enough training and/or lacking confidence as a user appear to be far greater barriers to use than any technical difficulties / teething troubles respondents may have encountered.

A majority of respondents (59%) report using the NHSnet at least once a week with GPs and practice managers the most frequent users. This level of usage is similar to that previously reported for the NHSnet in Scotland, where just over half of practices reported using the NHSnet at least once a week, and where GPs were cited as the most frequent users.<sup>3</sup>

Whilst a small number of respondents have had problems with email a majority of respondents are now using email as a means of communication. Indeed, some of the practices that agreed to be interviewed indicated that email had become the principal method of communications across the PCT.

Few of the respondents report using the NHSnet to access hospital appointment systems and/or receive test results from hospitals. This may suggest that while general practices have made good progress in investing and installing the technology necessary to facilitate improved communication of clinical information, this investment in technology is not yet widespread across the NHS as a whole.

There is still some suggestion within this survey of differential access to resources between different professions in primary care. The original survey found that fewer than one in ten practice nurses had easy desktop access to the NHSnet, and/or the internet.<sup>1</sup> Whilst their levels of access have increased greatly since the 1999 survey, practice nurses still lag behind GPs and practice managers in terms of having easy access to the NHSnet, and/or the internet.

The NHSnet is most commonly used to search for research information or guidance. Two thirds of responding GPs report using web connections for this purpose, and given the recent implementation of NHSnet and the developing (ie early) stage of some online resources, this level of uptake is encouraging. However, all respondents in this survey still report greater use of paper-based information resources. This is a similar finding to our previous survey<sup>1</sup> and to those reported in other studies for GPs.<sup>9,10</sup> Whilst some respondents are using both formats there is still a clear preference for a paper version. For example, GPs and practice nurses report making more use of the paper version of the BMJ as opposed to the online version. For the time being, paper-based publications (and especially summaries of research findings) may still represent the most convenient and effective medium for disseminating messages within the primary care setting.

One of the inherent problems in asking people to state which information resources they refer to is that some may have difficulty in identifying those they have actually read and used with any certainty. A good example of this in this survey is the reported usage of the *Cochrane Library* and the *Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effectiveness (DARE)*. In this survey 23% of all responding GPs, practice nurses and practice managers state that they have used the *Cochrane Library* whilst less than 1% report using *DARE*. Yet, a search of the *Cochrane Library* includes a search of *DARE*, as it is one of the principal components of the *Cochrane Library* as well as being available to search online as a resource in its own right.

A majority of respondents report using NHSnet to find research evidence and or information for patients. However, the type and quality of patient information materials being accessed is unclear and may merit further investigation.

Whilst respondents are using NHSnet to find research evidence and or information for patients, few appear to be making use of either the *National electronic Library for Health (NeLH)* or *NHS Direct Online*. Indeed 30% of all responding GPs, practice nurses and practice managers state that they have never heard of the NeLH. There is of course the possibility that respondents are using these websites without realising it. It should be noted that the NeLH is still officially a pilot project and *NHS Direct Online* has been widely publicised in the national media as an information resource for the general public. However, there is still much scope to promote the availability and value of these important information resources to health professionals.

Whilst a majority of PCG/Ts have reported arranging training for practice staff in how to use email (84%), search NHSnet (62%) and or the internet (69%), the general practice survey suggests that there is still a need for further training. It may be that training for practice staff has been previously delivered in 'one-off' packages resulting in a 'miss it - miss out' scenario for many staff. Alternatively, in some cases training seems to have been provided at the same time as, or prior to, installation so that when respondents actually got round to making use of NHSnet, they had forgotten how to do so. It could be, as it is for many a home PC user, that what practice staff really need is the provision of regular brief training sessions and or access to support upon which they can call when the need arises. What is clear is that any future investment in training should assess the effectiveness of the training already delivered.

Training primary care team members in skills such as internet searching, finding the evidence, and critical appraisal may help to ensure that available online resources are exploited more effectively. However, respondents to this survey have highlighted a 'lack of time' in the working day as one of the main reasons as to why they never or rarely made use of NHSnet. This finding is similar to an earlier survey of GPs in which respondents indicated that a 'lack of personal time' was the main barrier to them being able to practice evidence based medicine.<sup>10</sup>

It may be that time constraints and competing priorities that come with working in a busy general practice, make it difficult for many practice staff to make best use of a new resource. However, some practices do seem to be making more headway in finding the time to use NHSnet than others are. Given this, there may be some merit in undertaking a "diagnostic analysis"<sup>11</sup> which would investigate the underlying reasons why some practices are more successful than others are. Such an approach may reveal potential enabling factors, the details of which could in turn be shared with the less successful practices to assist and encourage increased usage of NHSnet. Given that it is possible to identify the individual respondents to this survey, there may be scope for the project team to undertake a further investigation to identify potential enabling factors.

Since the 1999 survey there has been a reduction in the percentage of all respondents (from 53% to 36%) and in particular GPs (from 59% to 43%), reporting having access to library services. This may turn out to be nothing more than an anomaly of this survey. However, it may be that GPs are less aware of the existence/availability of such services, which would suggest there is a need for greater promotion of the information support services that are available. Alternatively, it could be that GPs really do perceive that they have less access and this in turn could suggest that they actually do have less access. Given the lack of clarity, these lower levels of awareness merit further investigation.

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## CONCLUSIONS

Since our 1999 survey General practices have clearly made progress in setting up the infrastructure that is necessary to make best use of available research evidence.

A majority of respondents are using NHSnet at least once a week. Given the recent implementation of NHSnet and the developing (ie early) stage of some online resources, this level of uptake is encouraging.

Whilst, NHSnet is most commonly used to search for research information or guidance, all respondents in this survey still report greater access and use of paper-based information resources. Information providers could do more to raise awareness and promote the value of online evidence based resources such as the National electronic Library for Health (NeLH).

In terms of developing the skills that are necessary to make best use of available research evidence, some training has been provided for practice staff but more ongoing support will probably be required.

The time constraints associated with working in general practice make it difficult for some practice staff to make best use of NHSnet. Given this, there may be some merit in investigating the reasons why some practices are more successful than others are, and to identify potential enabling factors which could be employed to assist and encourage increased usage of NHSnet.

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**SEARCH STRATEGIES**

The following databases were searched for reports of research on primary care staff access to the research evidence:

Health Management Information Consortium (1999-2001)  
CINAHL (1999-2001)  
British Nursing Index (1999-2001)  
MEDLINE (1999-2001)

The search strategies are listed below.

**HMIC**

(computer\* or internet or www or ict or pc or pcs or computing or (information near technolog\*)) in ti,ab,de  
primary care in ti,ab,de  
(gp or gps or general pract\* or practice nurse\* or practice staff) in ti,ab,de  
#1 and (#2 or #3)  
#4 and (PY > "1998")  
nhsnet or project connect  
#5 not #6  
#6 not #5  
#8 and (PY > "1998")

**CINAHL**

(computer\* or internet or www or ict or pc or pcs or computing or nhsnet or project connect or (information near technology)) in ti,ab,de  
"Primary-Health-Care"/ all topical subheadings / all age subheadings  
primary care in ti,ab,de  
(gp or gps or general practi\* or family practi\* or practice nurse\* or practice staff) in ti,ab,de  
#1 and (#2 or #3 or #4)  
explode "United-Kingdom"/ all topical subheadings / all age subheadings  
#5 and #6

**BNI**

(computer\* or internet or www or ict or pc or pcs or computing or nhsnet or project connect or (information near technology)) in ti,ab,de  
"Primary-Health-Care"/ all topical subheadings / all age subheadings  
primary care in ti,ab,de  
(gp or gps or general practi\* or family practi\* or practice nurse\* or practice staff) in ti,ab,de  
#1 and (#2 or #3 or #4)  
explode "United-Kingdom"/ all topical subheadings / all age subheadings  
#5 and #6  
#7 and (PY > "1998")

**MEDLINE**

"Family-Practice"/ all subheadings  
explode "Primary-Health-Care"/ all subheadings  
"Physicians-Family"/ all subheadings  
"Community-Health-Nursing"/ all subheadings  
explode "Community-Health-Services"/ all subheadings  
explode "Computer-Communication-Networks"/ all subheadings  
#1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6  
(computer\* or internet\* or ict or pc or pcs or computing or (information near technol\*) or nhsdirect or project connect) in ti,ab  
primary care in ti,ab  
(gp or gps or general practi\* or practice nurs\* or practice staff) in ti,ab  
(#1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #9 or #10) and (#6 or #8)  
explode "Great-Britain"/ all subheadings  
#11 and #12



## APPENDIX 2

### GP SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

**1. Do you have access to any of the following within your general practice/health centre?**  
*(easy access = in own office/consulting room; less easy = shared access with other staff; not easy = not in the building but available elsewhere e.g. local NHS library / post graduate centre)*

(please tick one box for each resource)	Yes, easy	Yes, less easy	Yes, but not easy	No access	Not sure
A PC with a CD-ROM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NHSnet (nww websites)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Internet (www websites)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2. Is your practice connected to NHSnet?**

- Yes
- No  Go to question 10.
- Not sure  Go to question 10.

**3. If your practice is connected to NHSnet, how often do you make use of this connection?**

- Hourly
- Daily
- Weekly
- Rarely
- Never

**4. Have you ever used NHSnet for any of the following activities?**

(please tick for each activity listed)	Yes, regularly	Yes, occasionally	No, never
Accessing hospital appointment systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receiving test results from hospitals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sending email messages (admin)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sending email messages (clinical)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sending email messages (other)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding research or guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding/printing patient information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessing NHS Direct	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5. Has your practice:**

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Discussed the use of NHSnet at staff meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Produced a policy on work based usage of NHSnet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**6. In your practice, do *all* doctors have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

Yes   
No

**7. In your practice, do *all* nurses have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

Yes   
No

**8. In your practice, does the practice manager have easy access (in own office) to NHSnet?**

Yes, easy   
No

**9. If your practice has a NHSnet connection, but you have never or rarely used it, please tell us the reasons why:**

## FINDING/USING RESEARCH

### 10. Which of the following sources of online research information do you use (via your practice computer)?

(please tick for each source)

	Use regularly	Use occasionally	Aware of but never used	I've never heard of this
Bandolier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BMJ Online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clinical Evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cochrane Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARE (Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effect)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective Health Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective Medicine Today	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Based Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Based Nursing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National electronic Library for Health (NeLH)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Service Frameworks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NHS Economic Evaluation Database	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NICE Guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other online resources (please give details)				

### 11. If you have used the *National electronic Library for Health (NeLH)*, which of its resources have you used?

(please tick for each resource listed)

	Yes, regularly	Yes, occasionally	No, never
Clinical Evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cochrane Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective Health Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Based on Call	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hitting the Headlines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HTA Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing to make a difference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Service Frameworks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NeLH Guidelines Database	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NHS Economic Evaluation Database	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Findings Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reviews of Effectiveness (Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effect)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other resources (please give details)			

**12. Which of the following PAPER sources of research information do you use?**

(please tick for each publication)

	Refer to regularly	Refer to occasionally	Aware of but never used	Never heard of
Bandolier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BMJ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
British J of General Practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clinical Evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug and Therapeutics bulletin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective Health Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective Medicine Today	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Based Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Based Nursing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NICE Guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nursing Times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other journals (please give details)				

**13. Have you used information from any of the sources listed in questions 10 or 12 (either paper or electronic) to inform your clinical practice, within the last year?**

No

Yes  please describe:

**14. Tell us the name of the internet/NHSnet site that you consider most useful to your work:**

**MAKING MORE USE OF ONLINE RESOURCES**

**15. In the last 12 months have you received any training in any of the following:**

(please tick all that apply)

	Yes	No	Not sure
General computer skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using NHSnet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Searching the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Searching databases such as MEDLINE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Searching the Cochrane Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using research evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Critical appraisal skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using computer based admin systems (eg EMIS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using practice / trust communication systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**16. If you have answered yes to Question 15, tell us who arranged the training you received:**

(please tick all that apply)	Yourself	Practice	PCG / PCT	Health Authority	Other
General computer skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using NHSnet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Searching the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Searching databases such as MEDLINE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Searching the Cochrane Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using research evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Critical appraisal skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using computer based admin systems (eg EMIS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using practice / trust communication systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**17. Do you feel that you have any outstanding training requirements?**

- I need to be trained to use a computer
- I need to be trained to use NHSnet
- I need to be trained to use the Internet
- I need to be trained to search databases such as MEDLINE
- I have no outstanding training requirements

**18. Is there any additional training which you feel would enhance your use of NHSnet ?**

**19. Do you have access to a librarian (or other professional) who can undertake literature searches for you?**

- Yes
- No  Go to question 21.
- Not sure  Go to question 21.

**20. If you have answered yes, tell us where the librarian (or other professional) is located**

- In the general practice
- At the local hospital trust
- At the health authority
- At the PCG/PCT headquarters
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**21. Does your practice have its own website?**

- Yes
- No  Go to question 23.
- Not sure  Go to question 23.

**22. If your practice has a website, what information is available via that website?**

(please tick for each resource)

	Yes	No	Not sure
Practice staff contact details	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice opening hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Details of available clinics and services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to view appointments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to book appointments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to order a repeat prescription	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to consult a GP via email	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clinical information/advice for patients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**23. Is your practice a GP training practice?**

Yes   
No

**24. Which of the following best describe your current role?**

GP   
Practice Nurse   
Practice Manager   
Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**25. What is your age?** 20-29   
30-39   
40-49   
50-59   
60 plus

**26. Are you** Male   
Female

**27. Do you have access to the Internet at home?**

Yes   
No

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**

**Please return the questionnaire using the freepost envelope provided.**

**NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination  
University of York  
York  
YO10 5DD**

**PCT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

**About the PCG/T**

**1. Is the PCG/PCT headquarters connected to NHSnet?**

- Yes  Go to Question 3  
No  Go to Question 2

**2. If the PCG/PCT headquarters is NOT connected to NHSnet, when will it be connected ?**

- Within the next 6 months  Go to Question 5.  
Within the next 6-12 months  Go to Question 5.  
Not sure  Go to Question 5.

**3. In the PCG/T headquarters, do *all* admin staff have easy access (in own office) to NHSnet?**

- Yes   
No   
Not sure

**4. Is there anything that discourages staff at the PCG/T headquarters from accessing NHSnet ?**

- No   
Yes

please describe:

***About Practices within the PCG/T***

**5. Is the PCG/T monitoring how the NHSnet is used by practices:**

- Yes   
No   
Not sure

**6. Has the PCG/T ever produced a policy to on how practices can make best use of NHSnet ?**

- Yes  Go to Question 7.  
No  Go to Question 8.  
Not sure  Go to Question 8.

**7. If yes, please give a brief outline of the PCG/T policy**

**8. From your own knowledge, have *all* practices within the PCG/T been satisfied with the level of communication and information from the NHSIA regarding the roll out of NHSnet within your PCG/T ?**

- Yes, all have been satisfied
- Yes, most have been satisfied
- Half have been satisfied
- Few practices have been satisfied
- Not sure

**9. Has the PCG/T formally collected feedback from practices on how well the installation of NHSnet went ?**

- Yes  Go to Question 10.
- No  Go to Question 11.
- Not sure  Go to Question 11.

**10. If yes, has the PCG/T passed the feedback from practices to the NHSIA ?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**11. From your own knowledge, have there been any major problems regarding the connection of practices within the PCG/T to the NHSnet ?**

- No
- Yes  please describe:



**12. Have practices within the PCG/T ever received guidance or training from the NHSIA on the various uses/services of NHSnet ?**

- Yes   
No   
Not sure

**13. In the last 12 months has the PCG/T arranged training for practice staff in any of the following:**

	Yes	No	Not sure
Creating websites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Critical appraisal skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic communication (email)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General computer skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Searching databases such as MEDLINE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Searching the Cochrane Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Searching the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using research evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the National Electronic Library for Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the NHSnet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**14. Does the PCG/T have its own website ?**

- Yes  the website address is: \_\_\_\_\_  
No   
Not sure

**15. What is your job title ?** Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.  
Please return the questionnaire using the freepost envelope provided.**

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**1. Do *all* clinical staff have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

(Probe which staff do, which don't)

**2. Are practice staff / are you yourself using NHSnet ?**

(Probe: If yes how are they using it, for what purposes e.g. hospital results / email / internet / online booking of appointments)

**3. What do you find the most useful aspects of using the NHSnet for work**

(eg easy access to online resources / searching for info / email)

**4. What online resources do staff use most frequently ?**

**5. Is there anything that discourages staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

(Probe: what about time ?)

**6. Is the practice monitoring how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally)**

**7. Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet**

**8. Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?**

**9. Are practice staff having any problems using the service.**

(Probe: have they reported any problems to NHSIA – how were problems resolved if at all)

**10. Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet**

**SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS****SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT 1****practice characteristics**

- Urban practice in Tyne and Wear
- Non training practice
- List size <5000
- 2 Partners

**Do all clinical staff all admin staff have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

Yes 2 GPs and 1 nurse have desktop access.

**Are practice (clinical / non clinical) staff using NHSnet ?**

Mostly used by admin staff (ie practice manager, deputy and admin secretary) accessing information (eg copies of NSFs etc), general primary care admin work.

Some staff don't have access - receptionists said at the start that they were not interested in using another system on top of practice system.

Doctors and nurses do use it to access online journals but they tend to access these more often when they are at home.

**What online resources do staff use most frequently ?**

Can't say as difficulties gaining access, problems with connection, until this week only 1 (practice manager) was able to gain access and send emails.

**Is there anything that discourages practice staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

See above response and below.

**Is the practice monitoring how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally) ?**

Practice has a policy – staff contracts state that it can only be used for work related purposes. The doctors of course use it for other things but then they are the employers.

**Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet ?**

Yes all staff received guidance on use in their contracts.

Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?

Tend to do training informally and in-house and its on an ongoing basis – staff let me know what areas they need help in. Many staff only work part time and its difficult to release staff for formal days of training outside of the practice. Tend to use step by step written guides for staff to follow or sit and show them.

**Are practice staff having any problems using the service ?**

Issues around installation, server problems – main difficulty was that the Health Authority decided that the practice had to have two servers one for messaging the other for clinical. As a result the email service was slow and was going down continuously. There were access problems for staff in that only I could send and receive emails

The software suppliers were good, always responsive, although they never did tell us what the underlying problem was – probably because we wouldn't understand what they were on about anyway.

We have just resolved the problem by upgrading to windows XP (although not without the same initial access problems – took the engineer six hours to sort the email system) and by upgrading the clinical server.

**Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet ?**

Wish I had time to sit down and go through it all and get to grips with it.

Its useful for accessing information and to see what other practices are doing and offering.

I do find it intrusive in so much as it claims my attention quicker than say written/ paper documents and correspondence.

## **SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT 2**

### **practice characteristics**

- Suburban (Mixed) practice in Bradford area
- Training practice
- List size >10,000
- 6 Partners

### **Do all clinical staff all admin staff have easy access (in own office/ consulting room) to NHSnet?**

Yes, all the doctors and nurses.

### **Are practice (clinical / non clinical) staff using NHSnet ?**

All 32 PCs in practice have NHSnet. So it's available to all 40 staff if they need it, want to use it. Although not everybody needs it - we've got 10 receptionists and they don't really need access but they could if they wanted to.

### **What online resources do staff use most frequently ?**

As practice manger I haven't used it that much, occasionally use it to access the BMA site. Of course this Health Authority has its own intranet site which we use for information when we need to find something. It looks like they want us to process NHS Pensions through the connection now so my use will increase. I suppose that's the point - looking at NHSnet is not a real priority for work so its not in the culture to use it yet.

Doctors are using it for the odd thing but very ad-hoc – tend to search when they are not seeing patients which isn't that often.

### **Is there anything that discourages practice staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

Time - people haven't had the time to investigate what's available – those who have got the internet at home are more clued up.

### **Is the practice monitoring how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally) ?**

We have a policy written down somewhere – just states people should only use it for work related activities.

### **Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet ?**

We have all just learnt to use email – though its still an effort to get people to check their emails daily.

### **Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?**

We have had no internet training. Health Authority and PCT haven't offered us any training.

### **Are practice staff having any problems using the service ?**

Not really problems as such more time and manpower.

The main problem in the practice is that we don't have anybody with knowledge - an IT person if you like – someone with IT knowledge who can install everything and provide support to staff. There has never been that sort of resource in the practice and maybe we should employ an IT trouble shooter. We could only afford a part time person so maybe its

something we could share with other practices or be provided by the PCT, especially as they want us to get into all this IT stuff.

Not having support means that when the day to day problems occur people just get annoyed and it puts them off using services as a result. If we had someone we might make better use of it

I suppose the other problem or barrier to use we have is our clinical system. That's what's open all the time whether you're booking appointments or seeing patients. To use the NHSnet you have to close it down, its not easy to come in and out of the system. What we need is an internet button that you can press, maybe linked to the main medical sites you want. Again because it's a bother, people don't.

**Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet ?**

We have all got it, its just a more time, can I be bothered to make use of it issue.

## **SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT 3**

### **practice characteristics**

- Mixed / Rural Practice in Calder
- Training practice
- List size: >15,000
- 11 Partners

### **Do all clinical / all admin staff have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

Yes all GPs and all nurses have access from their own PCs.

Some of the admin staff have access – practice manager, reception manager, secretaries and IT co-ordinator. There is one PC in the reception and receptionists use that if they need to send business emails.

### **Are practice (clinical / non clinical) staff using NHSnet ?**

We use it (admin staff) for email-most of our correspondence with PCG is via email. Also frequently use a program called multi-map for locating addresses of patients who've moved in or out – we are a big practice covering a large area.

The nurses mostly use the connection for email and the Travax service.

GPs again use it for email. One GP is on the PCG board so is on it a lot. All the GPs use it now and again for things like journals.

### **Is there anything that discourages practice staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

Nothing that comes to mind, we all use it when they need to.

### **Does the practice have a policy on how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally) ?**

Practice has a policy – NHSnet can only be used for work related purposes.

### **Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet ?**

Yes all staff received training. We have an IT co-ordinator so we have all been shown how to use email, search the internet, and use the various software programs we've got. Training is informal because we have someone in the practice we don't need to go elsewhere.

### **Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?**

Not really.

### **Are practice staff having any problems using the service ?**

Nothing worth reporting, again we've got a dedicated IT person so any day to day problems that may arise are dealt with. We had no problems with the installation and we haven't had any connection problems. No complaints as yet.

### **Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet ?**

No quite happy with it.

## **SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT 4**

### **practice characteristics**

- Urban Practice in Teeside
- Training practice
- List size: >15,000
- 7 Partners

### **Do all clinical / all admin staff have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

Yes all GPs and all nurses have desktop access from their own PCs.

30% of admin staff currently do, but this will change over the next week or two when everyone will have access – some people are still working from dumb terminals.

### **Are practice (clinical / non clinical) staff using NHSnet ?**

Email is the main use – its now the main form of communication both externally and internally.

I (practice manager) sometimes use the internet facilities but email is the biggest bonus.

The GPs and nurses main use is also email. But they also use the internet to seek out evidence on particular topics.

### **Is there anything that discourages practice staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

No don't think so.

### **Does the practice have a policy on how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally) ?**

It can only be used for work related purposes.

### **Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet**

Yes all staff received training on using email and the internet. We have had in-house training, training put on by the health authority and we also arranged training from a commercial organisation.

Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?

Not directly, we are having an enormous struggle to keep up with the speed of change within the practice. We have made a quick transition from managing a central computer with dumb terminals to dealing with integrated network administration. So for us its been more about ensuring that peoples skills have kept up with the culture change.

### **Are practice staff having any problems using the service ?**

Don't think so – only minor thing is that still don't really have smooth access to email for non-NHS email addresses. Still doesn't cope very well with bog standard addresses and we have to convert them into X400 format.

### **Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet ?**

No problems, the service seems to be working well.



## **SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT 5**

### **practice characteristics**

- Mixed Practice in County Durham
- Non training practice
- List size: <5000
- 1.5 Partners

### **Do all clinical / all admin staff have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

Yes all GPs and the practice nurse have NHSnet on their own PCs.

Practice manager and senior receptionist have access.

### **Are practice (clinical / non clinical) staff using NHSnet ?**

Practice manager - using it quite a lot, quite amazed actually. Emailing rather than phoning now – email monthly stats to the PCT.

The practice nurse uses it a little bit – sending emails and uses the net to find patient information.

One GP uses it a little bit. One GP doesn't use it at all but then he doesn't use a computer at all, says he is too old to learn.

### **Is there anything that discourages practice staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

Only time I suppose – If I had more time I'd probably use it more.

### **Does the practice have a policy on how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally) ?**

We say it should only be used for work.

### **Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet ?**

The health authority provided training how to use email, how to send attachments, how to search, how to create your own websites. They had a trainer in place but I think this service has yet to be taken up by the PCT.

I personally have lots of informal training from my family !

Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?

More time to explore and understand, really like to know more about whats available.

### **Are practice staff having any problems using the service ?**

We haven't had any problems, although I know of other practices that have had problems. It can be a little slow at times but nothing really.

### **Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet ?**

Not really.

## **SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT 6**

### **practice characteristics**

- Rural Practice in Northumberland
- Non training practice
- List size: <5000
- 3 Partners

### **Do all clinical / all admin staff have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

Yes all GPs and all practice nurses.

The computer manager, practice manager and senior administrator all have access. Possible for the rest of the admin staff to have access but not necessary.

### **Are practice (clinical / non clinical) staff using NHSnet ?**

Admin – email apart, use it very rarely, hardly use it at all – installing virus checkers, used blackboard.com for online courses. Use email.

The clinical staff use it now and then to find clinical information. They tend to use it when they are working on a specific project.

### **Is there anything that discourages practice staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

No, can only think of one instance when a connection to the BMA website was intermittent, but that was fine a couple of days later.

### **Does the practice have a policy on how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally) ?**

Work related purposes – new staff get told this as part of their initiation, but not a lot of interest anyway.

### **Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet ?**

All the people who use it or need to use it have been on the health authority courses. Those staff who don't need to use it could have gone on courses but there wasn't that much interest. Day to day problems are resolved by the computer manager.

### **Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?**

No.

### **Are practice staff having any problems using the service ?**

No real problems.

### **Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet ?**

No.

## **SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT 7**

### **practice characteristics**

- Rural Practice in North Cumbria
- Training practice
- List size: <5000
- 1 Partner

### **Do all clinical / all admin staff have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

No GP and practice nurse do not have desktop access – practice computer system still has dumb terminals. Practice manager and administrator have access.

### **Are practice (clinical / non clinical) staff using NHSnet ?**

Practice manager – use email for general communication, PCT / health authority communication and communicating with vendors. Use the internet for online banking, online NHS pensions, and the telephone directory.

Limited use of email by clinical staff but they are not using the NHSnet for anything else.

### **Is there anything that discourages practice staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

Yes without a practice clinical system that is NHSnet compatible the service is nigh on useless. Also see final comments below

### **Does the practice have a policy on how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally) ?**

Formal security policy in place.

### **Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet ?**

Staff have all received training on various aspects of net utilisation – all arranged by the practice.

### **Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?**

No.

### **Are practice staff having any problems using the service ?**

No real problems with the NHSnet.

### **Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet ?**

We have had an NHSnet connection for nearly 2 years and in that time it has been no tangible benefits from having it. Currently, we can't receive lab results (local hospital won't have this capability till the end of the year at the earliest), we can't make online referrals or book ambulances. In addition, despite investing lots of time (nearly 2 years), effort and money (hiring consultants) to try to get the hospital and the local practices to use the same clinical system, this plan has now been shelved (due to a lack of funds). Practices have been told to make their own arrangements, so in effect we have had 2 years of our own development time wasted.

This all might sound negative but I'm not really. Developing the IT capabilities of the NHS is absolutely right and is the way forward. However, the development is painfully slow. The Dept of Health needs to contract with someone who can actually deliver the change in a reasonable time frame – such delays wouldn't be acceptable in industry.

## **SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT 8**

### **practice characteristics**

- Rural Practice in North Cumbria
- Non training practice
- List size >10,000
- 8 Partners

### **Do all clinical / all admin staff have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

Yes all the GPs and all the nurses have desktop access.

All the admin staff have access – some share computers but everyone has access and can access.

### **Are practice (clinical / non clinical) staff using NHSnet ?**

GPs and nurses are using it for clinical work and for accessing information.

Admin staff are using it for personnel, online pensions and will be using it for the inland revenue soon – probably for the next financial year. Also use it for information on NSF's, finding information for patients (that they can understand), we download and circulate the chief executives bulletin every week.

Email is the main form of communication for all staff.

### **Is there anything that discourages practice staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

No, everyone has had a play with it, and uses it.

### **Does the practice have a policy on how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally) ?**

We have a work related policy.

### **Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet ?**

All staff have received training. We have had in-house training, had training from the now defunct health authority and had off-site training from an external agency. Training has covered all aspects of searching and use NHSnet facilities as well as general computer skills.

### **Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?**

No.

### **Are practice staff having any problems using the service ?**

We haven't had any problems to date.

### **Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet ?**

It's a good service and everyone is making use of it, could probably do with more time to make even more use out of it.

## **SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT 9**

### **practice characteristics**

- Mixed Practice in East Riding
- Non training practice
- List size: 5000 – 10,000
- 5 Partners

### **Do all clinical / all admin staff have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

Yes all the GPs and nurses have desktop access.

The practice manager, the medical secretary, the dispensary supervisor, audit clerk and IT support person all have access and use it. In fact, anybody who has contact with the outside world has access.

### **Are practice (clinical / non clinical) staff using NHSnet ?**

On the admin side, everyone is using email to communicate. We now use the internet for purchasing stationary supplies, downloading articles, newspapers, our pensions are online, we are looking into doing VAT online. Its also useful for maps /finding directions.

Doctors and nurses are all using it for email purposes, to look up erudite journals etc.

### **Is there anything that discourages practice staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

Nothing, we've had no problems.

### **Does the practice have a policy on how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally)**

What you can and can't use the NHSnet for is now written into the contracts of employment for all staff.

### **Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet ?**

Everyone who is using NHSnet has had training on how to make use of the service. The training was arranged / provided by either the PCT or health authority.

### **Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?**

Can't think of anything.

### **Are practice staff having any problems using the service ?**

No real problems. Can be frustrating when the connection is slow or there is downtime. Health authority have recently switched providers from BT to Cable and Wireless so we'll see if that makes a difference.

### **Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet**

Life is much easier with it.

## **SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT 10**

### **Practice characteristics**

- Mixed Practice in North Yorkshire
- Non training practice
- List size: 5000 – 10,000
- 4 Partners

### **Do *all* clinical / *all* admin staff have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

Yes all the GPs and practice nurse have access from their own PCs.

The admin staff have shared access – Whilst all admin staff have access from their own PCs, there is one PC in the general office which we all use.

### **Are practice (clinical / non clinical) staff using NHSnet ?**

The GPs and the practice nurse all use the email service. As for the internet they all use it periodically to look up journals or find patient information. The practice nurse also uses it to access travax.

The admin staff use email to communicate with the PCT and other practices. Also use it to find information such as the National Service Frameworks.

### **Is there anything that discourages practice staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

Not particularly.

### **Does the practice have a policy on how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally) ?**

We have an informal policy based on trust, as we are a small practice we just trust each other to use it appropriately.

### **Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet ?**

The health authority provided general skills training on how to make use of the services. The practice provided some additional training using the internet and email.

### **Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?**

Not particularly.

### **Are practice staff having any problems using the service ?**

We haven't had any problems.

### **Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet ?**

Its an additional resource for information.

## **SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT 11**

### **Practice characteristics**

- Mixed Practice in North Yorkshire
- Training practice
- List size: 5000 - 10,000
- 6 Partners

### **Do *all* clinical / *all* admin staff have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

Those that need access have access.

All the GPs have desktop access to the internet and have email accounts. The practice nurses do not have access to the internet or to email.

The practice manager and the office manager also have desktop access to the internet and have email accounts.

### **Are practice (clinical / non clinical) staff using NHSnet ?**

The GPs are aware of it and use it as and when they need to find information. One doctor uses it more than the others.

The practice manager and the office manager have been using it to communicate with the Pensions Agency – can't send paper now it has to be done via the web. Also used it for the Inland Revenue and to find out about things like maternity pay. Generally, use it as and when required.

### **Is there anything that discourages practice staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

Not particularly, if people need to use it they use it.

### **Does the practice have a policy on how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally) ?**

We don't have a formal policy but don't encourage excessive personal use – limited personal use is accepted.

### **Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet**

The software company people provided training on how to use the internet and email in particular for all users.

### **Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?**

No.

### **Are practice staff having any problems using the service ?**

We haven't had any problems in using the NHSnet, but we did have some software and system problems initially.

### **Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet ?**

We are a practice that encourages use of IT, so we are keen to use any new bits of kit that come along.



## **SUMMARY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT 12**

### **Practice characteristics**

- Urban Practice in Leeds
- Training practice
- List size: 5000 - 10,000
- 6 Partners

### **Do all clinical / all admin staff have easy access (in own office/consulting room) to NHSnet?**

All the GPs and nurses have access from their own PCs. I (the practice manager) am the only person on the admin side with access.

### **Are practice (clinical / non clinical) staff using NHSnet ?**

I use it to access the Inland Revenue site, and the NHS Pensions Agency site and occasionally search for the odd piece of information.

The doctors mainly use the local Pathfinder site to find information/look at journals. The nurses use the same site if they use it at all. We are what you might call a practice of low usage.

### **Is there anything that discourages practice staff from accessing NHSnet ?**

I suppose time and we're a collection of luddites ! Its not really a question of either apathy or resistance, its just not really a priority when other things are more pressing.

### **Does the practice have a policy on how the NHSnet is used by staff (either formally or informally) ?**

Such little use is made of the service that we haven't anything formal in place.

### **Have all practice staff received guidance or training on the use of NHSnet**

Instruction has been thin on the ground. The training we have received included one brief session arranged by the health authority, which was so long ago, we'd all forgotten how to use NHSnet when we actually got round to making use of it. The other training we have had was given by the clinical system supplier. I didn't think either was particularly good to be honest.

### **Is there any training or skills which you feel would enhance your and your colleagues use of NHSnet ?**

I suppose more training on how to use it, but given we are low users its not really a priority.

### **Are practice staff having any problems using the service ?**

We haven't had any problems in using the NHSnet, but we did have some software and system problems initially. Every time we add a new PC to the system it takes ages to get it to work right. Also upgrades take forever to load.

Also what is this silly obsession with x400 email addresses, who on earth is ever, ever going to use and remember these – I can't remember the first five digits of my own never mind anyone else's.

**Are there any final comments you would like to make about your practices use of the NHSnet ?**

I get the occasional, interesting piece of work-related information but that's about it. As I said before its not a resource people are making much use of.

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