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The Benefits Of Improved Workflow And System Stability In Radiology



Faced with the challenge of streamlining the workflow, managing documentation, and accounting within a single system and ensuring system stability, Merian Iselin Clinic in Basel, Switzerland, opted for the Radiology Information System (RIS) from [medavis](#). Only to find that the medavis solution actually had a lot more to offer.

The Merian Iselin Clinic in Basel is a cutting-edge, patient-centric private clinic with a public mandate. The clinic specializes in orthopedic operations. What sets the clinic apart is the fact that around 90% of these are performed by attending physicians. There are also permanent nursing staff, physicians and admin staff, who take care of the smooth, every day running of the clinic, communication with referring physicians – in Merian Iselin Clinic’s case this is typically the attending physicians themselves – and patient care. Around 25,000 radiological examinations are performed every year. The clinic relies on cutting-edge information technology to ensure the availability of all relevant medical patient data.

Swayed by Product, Service, and improved Workflow

When the old Radiology Information System (RIS) was to be replaced in 2012, the clinic decided to go with medavis. “We evaluated all of the popular RIS solutions,” recalls Dr. med. Thomas Egelhof, chief physician of the Radiology Institute of Merian Iselin Clinic. According to Dr. Egelhof, medavis were chosen “because their product appeared to suit us, because the software seemed to be intuitive and easy to use, met all of our requirements, was based on the latest software and server architecture, they were known for their outstanding level of service and the company was prepared to implement an interface to our own Hospital Information System (HIS).” Christoph Kreutner, Head of Technology at the Radiology Institute, adds: “The RIS met other requirements as well: it streamlined the workflow and we were impressed by its robust speech recognition with good functionality and by the integration of accounting as a fixed component of the RIS.”

Intuitive Operation, Statistics as well as a Comprehensive Overview of a Patient’s Medical History

Make Life Easier

In the years during which Merian Iselin Clinic has been using the medavis RIS, the users have come to really appreciate some of the features that make their lives so much easier. Dr. Egelhof is full of praise for the RIS, which he says is “very straightforward, simplifies the workflow, has a highly intuitive user interface and generates statistics about our capacity, waiting times and turnover without any problems at all.” Kreutner is especially enthusiastic about the use of the DIAGNOSTIC PATIENT CENTER, a function which provides anytime access to a patient’s entire history from all the key workstations. “It’s an absolute first,” says Kreutner. “We’ve not seen such an elegant solution, which is always part of the screen, from any other vendor.” Another key feature, says Dr. Egelhof, is the ability to “look at examinations in advance, which means we can see what’s required and already assign an examination to a specific physician and if needed also make any changes to the standard examination protocol. No other vendor offered this function.” According to users, the ability to integrate one or more images into the report is another key feature. “The referring physicians appreciate the fact that all of the information is in one document, which makes their and our work easier,” says Kreutner.

Seamless Migration a “Memorable Experience”

medavis rose to the major challenge of migrating data from 2007 to the end of 2012 into the new RIS. Kreutner explains: “When we switched on the medavis RIS that afternoon in December 2012, we kept the old RIS running in the background just in case, so we could always switch back. But it proved unnecessary, we were able to work seamlessly with the new RIS from day one, with no disruptions and no need to go back to the old system. It was a memorable experience for us.” According to Kreutner, the vendor’s flexibility was crucial to the successful migration of the data: “medavis had the right people with us at the right time, and they were incredibly flexible in terms of the schedule. Training, which was organized in small groups of four in parallel to ongoing operation of the system, also proved very successful, and the well thought out menus are user-friendly and allow for straightforward learning on the job.”

medavis Allows for Better Use of Resources

The medavis RIS has made life easier for the staff of Merian Iselin Clinic. This has been reflected, for instance, in the significant drop in the number of inquiries from insurers, the reduced pressure on IT support staff and the cut in the time it takes to create reports: “We have fewer discrepancies and losses in our accounting, because we were now able to maintain much better control overall. Previously, each employee would work directly in the accounting program, whereas now each member of staff documents only the activities, without having anything to do with the accounting program, and only two dedicated employees are responsible for actual accounting,” says Kreutner. Because accounting is now much more precise, “I only have inquiries from insurers maybe once or twice a month instead of every day,” says Dr. Egelhof. He also says that the robust speech recognition functionality, which is used in conjunction with a medavis word processing module integrated into the software, has greatly increased efficiency. “The system no longer crashes during dictation.” Kreutner adds that the stability of the system means that the IT support team are now under much less pressure. Whereas system crashes used to be dealt with by merging reports manually, which was very time-consuming, “now there is almost no need to intervene manually, and the reports now leave us much more quickly than before and I can use my time more productively elsewhere,” says Kreutner.

Asynchronous Connection to HIS Prevents Loss of Data

The RIS at Merian Iselin features essential interfaces to the Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS) and to the hospital and accounting system. In the event that the interface to the hospital is down, be it owing to scheduled maintenance or to unforeseen events, no data are lost as a result, because medavis has had the foresight to implement the data connection bidirectionally and asynchronously: “Even if the hospital system is down, the interface created by medavis is designed to transfer the data asynchronously at a later point in time so that no data are lost,” explains Dr. Egelhof.

Exceeds all Expectations

Merian Iselin Clinic is absolutely delighted with both the product and its vendor. "All our expectations have been exceeded, the system works very well, is stable, and never lets us down," says Dr. Egelhof. "It is regarded as very user-friendly." The impact the system has had on the workflow and the general work atmosphere has been positive, he says: "At the front end the registration team works more efficiently, while at the back end statistics which enable us to identify trends are now directly available online. Generally, staff satisfaction has increased. The implementation of a single system has eliminated the hectic approach brought about by working with two systems."

medavis in it for the Long Haul

As long as the product, service and partnership are solid and the quarterly software updates are practical extensions as opposed to cosmetic fixes, then users are likely to be happy and the working relationship will undoubtedly be a long-term one: "Our partnership with medavis is very forward-looking," says Dr. Egelhof. "The support is excellent," he continues, "rarely are there any problems, and if we do need help, we can count on access to competent staff. We are extremely happy, the product and service are excellent, you are taken seriously as a customer and we have a very solid partnership with medavis." Unlike with large companies, there is contact at all levels, from support through to management. And as far as the decision to implement the medavis RIS is concerned, Dr. Egelhof says: "We couldn't do without this product, which is now a cornerstone of our workflows, and we would do the same again."

Published on : Tue, 24 Nov 2020