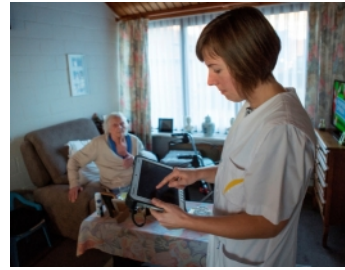




WIT-GELE KRUIS ANTWERP INVESTS FURTHER IN THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF ITS CARE SERVICES WITH THE TOUGHPAD FZ-G1

The nurses at Wit-Gele Kruis are an important link between the patient and the attending doctor. In the province of Antwerp in Belgium, nearly 900 nurses care for around 11,000 patients every month. Their goal is to enable patients to remain in their familiar environment as long and as independently as possible. Wit-Gele Kruis Antwerp recently developed a brand-new care software application to provide their nurses with even more support in their role.





Wit-Gele Kruis Antwerp invests further in the professionalisation of its care services with the Toughpad FZ-G1

Changing role of home nursing

Although Wit-Gele Kruis Antwerp has had a care application for five years, the organisation noticed that it was no longer appropriate for the changing role of the home nurse. "The old application focused more on the administrative side of nursing, but we wanted the new care application to support our nurses more and more in the - often complex - nursing process for each individual patient," Peter Daems, IT manager at Wit-Gele Kruis Antwerp, explains. "We also wanted to share our nursing observations and actions with other agencies involved in the patient's care."

That's why Wit-Gele Kruis Antwerp decided to develop a new care application. In addition to fully digitizing the administrative processes, functionalities were developed with the care process in mind. "This way, nurses are given suggestions for nursing interventions based on the observations they have entered via their care application. The application therefore supports the care process without taking the brainwork away from our nurses," Daems goes on to add. "If necessary, our patients' nursing files can also be shared with the family doctor."

New application, new hardware

Just like the software, Wit-Gele Kruis Antwerp's hardware was also due for replacement. Among other things, it was suffering from failures, slow processors and too short a battery life. Wit-Gele Kruis Antwerp launched a public tender in order to make a well-informed choice. "We had ten nurses test the three products that fell within our budget. Unfortunately, we found that they did not meet our requirements in terms of speed, connectivity, battery life and robustness," says Daems. "Although the Panasonic Toughpad FZ-G1 didn't initially seem to fit within our budget, we decided to test it anyway. It immediately proved to be the right decision. Furthermore, the Panasonic Toughpad FZ-G1 combined all our needs, such as a tablet, GPS and eID reader, in a single device. Not only is this really useful for our nurses, it also ensures that the final Total Cost of Ownership turned out to be considerably lower."

Can take a few knocks

The FZ-G1 has a powerful Intel Core i5 processor that can easily run the Wit-Gele Kruis Antwerp's care application. Its large, energy-saving battery is good for 20 hours of uninterrupted use. "That means the nurses can easily work for a full day without having to charge the battery," Daems explains. Its robust yet compact design also makes the tablet resistant to the shocks and knocks that are inherent to mobile everyday use. "In addition, excellent connectivity ensures that our nurses can always synchronize with the back office via 3G or 4G. That means they can keep the patient information up-to-date irrespective of whether the patient lives in a busy town or in a more remote countryside location."

Fast implementation and training

Wit-Gele Kruis Antwerp launched a pilot project for the implementation of the FZ-G1 and the new application in August 2014. "Initially, 70 nurses started using the tablet during their everyday work. That allowed us to test the platform comprehensively and at the same time prepare a training package based on staff feedback." Use of the tablets was systematically rolled out in the months that followed, and since the beginning of 2015, all employees of Wit-Gele Kruis Antwerp have been using the Toughpad FZ-G1.

Extensive functions, one device

Daems notes that the tablet and the new application have made the nurses' work much easier. "The good thing is that the FZ-G1 combines all the functions we need in a single device," he says. "For example, a nurse can check his or her route for the day on the tablet first thing in the morning and then set off. Once at the patient's home, the nurse can consult the patient's nursing file and record the care using the integrated eID reader."

"While providing care, the nurse can simply check the activities carried out in the application. Furthermore, the connectivity enables the nurse to retrieve information about medication straight away and, for instance, to tell the patient about any possible side effects," Daems continues. "At the end of the visit, the nurse checks off the appointment and again consults the FZ-G1 for the next destination. In the meantime, all the data is sent to the back office in real time and processed automatically. Without a doubt, the most important development is that the nurse can now concentrate almost entirely on providing the necessary care," Daems concludes.

Innovation with a view to care in the future

Meanwhile, Wit-Gele Kruis Antwerp will continue to invest in the quality of its care and services. "80 of our nurses are currently testing our improved care application. They are investigating the extent to which the application effectively supports the nurses' thought processes," says Daems. "If everything goes to plan, this will be fully rolled out at the start of 2016."

At the moment, Wit-Gele Kruis Antwerp is also busy developing a new extranet for family doctors. They, in turn, will be able to use this to consult the patient files that the nurses have built up and respond appropriately to medical problems or questions. "Since our nurses visit a patient daily, and often several times a day, they know the patient and their situation inside out. The care application will allow us to share this relevant information, if the patient consents to this, with the family doctor in future," as Daems explains. "This will then also enable them to run their consultations more efficiently and offer better medical care."



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