

## **Authenticity to Action Conference abstract (1)**

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**Title: Hearing the patient's voice: using digital storytelling to improve continence care in care homes**

Key words: continence, digital stories, Patient Voices, storytelling, e-learning, reflection

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A 2005 RCN audit of continence care in care homes highlighted several areas of concern. Availability and access to educational resources specific to the care home setting were found to be poor in many areas, with organisational issues such as staff recruitment and retention further compounding the problem.

To address the issue of limited availability of educational resources and provide a flexible approach to learning a web-based continence module has been developed.

A collection of digital patient stories are central to the module, offering an opportunity to understand the patient's experience and to focus particularly on issues of respect, dignity, trust and equity, the values of clinical governance (Stanton, 2003)

Storytelling has long been used as a vehicle for sharing insights, passing on knowledge and declaring values. Stories promote empathy, which in turn prompts reflection and serves as motivation for learning and acquiring new knowledge.

The digital stories are embedded in a learning opportunity that might ask the user to reflect on the issues raised or, when a clinical topic is the focus, to test their understanding of a specific clinical issue. Norton (2006) suggests staff can become overwhelmed with the volume of literature on incontinence and do not have the time to sort out what is actually meaningful. Existing attitudes and beliefs, which underpin staff approaches to continence care (Henderson and Kashka, 1999) can be gently challenged by reflection on others' experience and practice.

The stories within the module are between two and three minutes long. Each story is told by a patient or a carer and highlights specific problems encountered as a result of a particular condition. Storytellers were recruited from patient organisations such as The Alzheimer's Society, Stroke Society, National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society and James Parkinson's Centre. Ownership of the story is shared with the storyteller and the patient organisation and all stories are also part of the Patient Voices programme, a free resource of digital stories developed by patients, carers and service users.

This presentation will describe the process used to develop these stories and the potential for use in continence care, as well as changes to the approach used in the original web-based module made as a result of realising the full impact of what it means to put patients at the centre of the experience.

### References

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Stanton, P. (2003) *Strategic Leadership of Clinical Governance* in PCTs. London: Modernisation Agency (retrieved April 2007 from [www.pilgrimprojects.co.uk/clients/nhsma/cg2/index.htm](http://www.pilgrimprojects.co.uk/clients/nhsma/cg2/index.htm) )

Patient Voices Programme [www.patientvoices.org.uk](http://www.patientvoices.org.uk)

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### *Biographies*

**Pip Hardy** A degree in English Literature led Pip into education, educational publishing and the development of open, distance, work-based and e-learning materials across a range of professions, with a sideline in counselling, until her epiphany in relation to digital storytelling and its potential for transforming health and social care. She is currently writing up a master's dissertation looking at digital storytelling as a means of transforming healthcare education and service delivery.

**Joanne Mangnall** is a nurse continence advisor employed by Rotherham PCT. She was seconded to the Royal College of Nursing Institute in January 2005 to lead on a Continence Care in Care Homes project. The aims of this year-long project were to develop a care home specific continence assessment tool supported by educational resources that care home staff could utilize within the care home setting. Initial plans in relation to the educational focused on the production of a short educational video, however these plans changed once the power of digital storytelling was realized. Since working on the project Joanne has returned to her clinical role and incorporated a number of the continence stories into her training sessions with very positive feedback from staff.

