



02 Nov 2016
Mid-West Times, Geraldton WA

Author: Matthew Woodley • Section: General News • Article type : News Item
Classification : Regional • Audience : 21,306 • Page: 29 • Printed Size: 94.00cm²
Market: WA • Country: Australia • Words: 235 • Item ID: 680741533

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Tech boosts health care

■ Matthew Woodley

It only took one day for Yalgoo Health Centre clinical nurse Mary-Kate Walsh to use the new Emergency Telehealth Service.

The ETS uses technologies, such as video-conferencing, to provide better medical treatment to patients where those services aren't easily available.

Ms Walsh took full advantage of this when assessing a patient who arrived with abdominal pain on the first day it became operational.

"I could carry out a thorough abdominal examination because the doctor was showing me how via the videoconference and watching me to ensure I was doing it correctly," Ms Walsh said.

"I would not have been able to do that myself if I had not had access to the visual link to the doctor.

"The doctor could also speak directly to the patient to ask questions, rather than me having to relay information second-hand like I used to."

Yalgoo was the 76th site in WA to gain access to the service in August and, three months on, Ms Walsh said it gets used between five and 10 times a week and so far everything had run smoothly.

"We've had no problems at all. We get a really good service out here," she said.

"The cameras are very high definition, so cameras can actually zoom in on a patient so for things like skin conditions, wounds, rashes — it's really helpful."

The ETS was paid for with funding from Royalties for Regions.