The next challenge for leadership in mental health: IT-led transformation

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There are increasing demands on clinical staff to operate in a transparent and accountable way, which has led to increasing paperwork and time taken away from direct clinical care in an environment where demand is constantly increasing. Under these circumstances there will be a tendency for mental health organisations to put increasing amount of energy into elaborate boundary maintenance efforts both at the interface with external agencies and within mental health organisations themselves. These efforts work against community expectations of timely, seamless and holistic mental health that can only be met if there is a high level of collaboration between care agencies. Computer technology can, if used correctly, promote integration of care and ease the bureaucratic burden on clinical staff. Increasingly it is argued that implementation of IT, by itself, can drive transformational change. While harnessing this powerful force for future change will require clinical leadership, this important topic has not yet made it onto the psychiatrist training agenda.

Competing interests
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