

The use of eConsults in General Internal Medicine

The **eConsultBASE™ service** improves access to specialist care for patients, facilitating efficient and secure electronic communication between Primary Care Providers (PCPs) and specialists.

General internists in Canada are subspecialty providers in the inpatient and outpatient settings.

From Jan 2016 to Dec 2019, **276 eConsults on internal medicine cases** were analyzed.

88% of eConsults consisted of a single question related to diagnostic clarification.



eConsults were responded to in a median of 3.1 days, and took 15 minutes to complete.

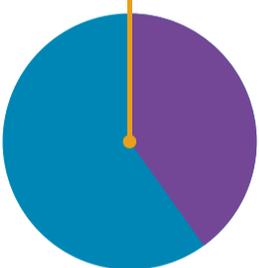


Outcomes of Survey



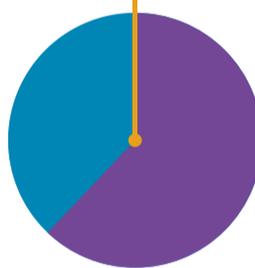
87% ranked the eConsult's helpfulness and educational value as 4 to 5 out of 5.

40%



In-person referral was avoided in 40% of cases.

62%



eConsult provided advice for a new/additional course of action.

Case Example

Day 1

PCP question: This patient has preeclampsia postpartum and has been treated with nifedipine for 4 weeks. When we tried to taper her Adalat, her BP increased again to 168/80. We are planning to continue her Adalat 10 mg BID for another 4 weeks before tapering again. Would you recommend a different protocol? When should we consider a primary hypertension?

Day 1

Specialist response: Preeclampsia/postpartum hypertension, while normally expected to clear in a few weeks, can take up to 6 months to clear in some patients. Beyond that time frame it would be reasonable to look for other causes for hypertension. I would continue the nifedipine as you have and closely monitor every few weeks, with down titrations as clinically indicated.

