

The LifeSigns® Systems RhythmCheck® Recorder – Case Study

Clinical Utilization of the RhythmCheck “Quick Look” Screen

Specialized home cardiac recovery programs have been in existence around the United States and in Canada since 1990. ECG rhythm assessment is one component that adds to the success of cardiac home care nursing. ECG monitors in 1990 were 23 pounds, bulky to carry, and approximately \$6000. Today home care nurses can benefit from new technology found in the Rhythm Check ECG monitor. Weighing less than 2 pounds, the Rhythm Check can be held in one hand, and costs approximately \$1000. The Rhythm Check can be connected to the patient via a lead cable for continuous monitoring and assessment or placed directly on the chest for a quick-look. The quick-look feature is especially helpful to home care nurses who easily run out of supplies on the road, especially when they have a full caseload of patients.

Frequently home care nurses call in to the agency office groaning that they have run out of ECG electrodes or ECG paper and still have cardiac patients to see that require ECG assessment.

On one occasion, the most organized and prepared of our cardiac nurses, Maya, was asked to see two additional patients in order to cover for an ill colleague. As the day progressed, Maya, had other unexpected situations arise. The two patients she agreed to see also required ECG assessment. One package of electrodes that she opened was dried out and unusable. It was a wintry day, and another package of electrodes fell out of her nurse bag into a puddle of mud and ice.

Maya was making her next to last visit at 1700 hours, when she discovered that she was out of electrodes. The office was closing and approximately 60 minutes away. She knew that she could not ask anyone in the office to bring her electrodes. The patient was just seven days post bypass surgery and had problems in the hospital with atrial fibrillation. Dysrhythmia assessment was definitively indicated.

After weighing her options, Maya remembered that the Rhythm Check monitor had the “quick look” capability. There are four permanent electrodes on the back of the little ECG monitor that allows the health professional to place the device on the patient’s chest and visualize a modified chest lead. Maya was ecstatic that she did not have to postpone the visit to the following morning, or search for additional electrodes. During this visit however Maya realized that the monitor had begun to display a “low battery” indicator.

At 1830, on the way to her final visit Maya was able to stop at a gas station and purchase two “AA” batteries. The old monitors used specially ordered batteries and once these were gone, all the nurse could do was wait for the next shipment of batteries. Conveniently, the Rhythm Check used standard “AA” batteries.

Maya also utilized the “quick look” capability to assess the patient’s rhythm status during the last visit. She typically transtelephonically downloaded the patient’s ECG to the compatible receiving software in the home care office, however the office was closed. Since the Rhythm Check has memory, May knew that she could save the ECG until the office opened the following day.

To this day, Maya, will not go make visits with any other ECG monitor than the Rhythm Check. She is a preceptor to new cardiac nurses, and always tells her story of the day the Rhythm Check saved her time, energy and a great deal of frustration.

The logo for Instromedix, featuring the word "Instromedix" in a bold, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol. A curved line arches over the top of the letters.

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