

Ambient AI scribes - What Makes Clinicians Want to Use Them?

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Introduction: Artificial intelligence (AI) scribe technologies, which listen in to clinician-patient encounters and generate structured summaries, can help clinicians reduce documentation burdens. However, we need better local understanding of how Australian clinicians view these tools as being safely integrated into their clinical workflows.

Aims: To explore how clinicians across different disciplines within Metro South HHS clinicians use and experience ambient AI-scribes during their clinical encounters.

Methods: Qualitative thematic study based on interviews with 50 clinicians representing six disciplines (emergency medicine, medicine, mental health, surgery; allied health; nursing) who participated in an AI scribe trial over five weeks in May-June 2025 across four hospitals in Metro South HHS.

Results: Positive experiences of scribe use included reduced documentation time, and less overtime, as well as lower cognitive load and enabling greater engagement with patients. Still, all interviewees noted that AI scribes were not error-free, although clinically significant errors were uncommon and restricted to highly complex consultations. They all highlighted the importance of reviewing AI scribe output. Our interviewees shared that wi-fi connectivity problems, equipment shortages, and scribe-sensitivity to ambient noises as potential barriers to adoption.

Conclusions and Relevance: There is strong potential for AI scribes to relieve documentation burden, enhance clinician-patient interactions, and improve note and data quality across different disciplines in Metro South HHS. Still, certain contextual and technical constraints need to be addressed in ensuring wider use and long-term adoption necessary to realising the full potential of this new AI-enabled technology.