



Video therapy support at Mediservice

“The use of video therapy support is always tailored to the needs of the patient. It can be performed anywhere and increases flexibility, safety and efficiency.”

Gabriëlle Duiker, Mediservice Therapy Support

Better day-to-day quality of life thanks to home care

In-home care and advice significantly improve the quality of life of patients with serious illnesses, helping them to cope with their often difficult situation. Thanks to Mediservice and the expanded offering following the 2019 acquisitions of the Bichsel Group and Curarex Swiss, the Galenica Group provides a unique and specialised range of home care services, considerably enhancing patients' health, wellbeing, safety and independence.

Sometimes help is needed quickly. A patient is at home trying to inject their medication using a "pen", as demonstrated by the Mediservice nurse the week before. They remove the pen cap, unscrew the cartridge holder, turn the threaded end and slide the cartridge into the holder until it clicks. Except that it does not click. The patient takes out his smartphone, opens the link he received and makes a video call. The nurse who visited him previously appears on the screen. She has the same pen and holds it up to the camera to go through the process again, step by step, with the patient. She checks via video that the threaded end is turned as far as it will go and that the cartridge is positioned correctly, and then it finally clicks into place. The patient attaches the needle to the pen and removes the protective cap. The pen is now ready for injection. To ensure the patient is comfortable using the pen, the nurse performs a dummy injection and observes the patient as he carries out the procedure on his own. Before ending the video call, they go over the key steps again together.

Personal advice via video telephony

Mediservice has expanded its home care service with this video therapy support, creating additional advantages for patients. The company operates throughout Switzerland and specialises in supporting patients with chronic and rare diseases who require specific drugs and complex therapies. In addition to home care, Mediservice also offers direct delivery of prescription medicines to patients.

"Our aim is for patients to be able to administer prescribed medications independently and correctly at home, thereby improving their wellbeing. Our new video therapy support is a vital part of this," explains Miriam James, Head of Distance Healthcare at Mediservice, pointing out the positive experiences and benefits of the new contact channel: "Patients appreciate how easy video telephony is to use and the opportunity to talk to a nurse or go through the individual steps again quickly in case of questions or uncertainty. But video telephony is only ever used as a supplement to personal contact and is not equally suited to all patients."

For data protection reasons, the video connection is encrypted, and no data are recorded or stored. Calls to nurses are therefore anonymous. Patients also do not need to download an app or install a program; instead, they simply click on the link sent to them by e-mail.

Sustainability coverage

Care plan depends on the illness and chosen therapy

Patients are registered for therapy support by their doctor or hospital. During an initial home visit, a specialised Mediservice nurse shows the patient and their relatives how to administer the medication correctly, discusses questions about symptoms and how to deal with side effects and provides the necessary materials. This initial contact is important in establishing trust. The further course and intensity of care depend on the illness and chosen therapy. For patients with chronic migraine, for example, one visit at the start of treatment is often sufficient to show them how to use the new therapy. Afterwards, support is mainly provided by video telephony or phone. “For the wellbeing of patients with chronic pain, it is essential that they can communicate with us on a regular basis,” says Gabriëlle Duiker, specialist nurse at Mediservice. Therapy support for patients with an immunodeficiency is different. During the first month, they are visited up to three times a week by the responsible nurse until they feel confident administering infusions, after which video calls are held every three or six months to discuss any problems or questions concerning day-to-day therapy man-

agement. In addition, the nurse regularly exchanges information with the prescribing doctor and informs them of any new developments during the course of therapy. Thanks to home care therapy support, patients can administer infusions themselves at home and no longer have to go to hospital. “Naturally, we will also visit patients if they want or in case of difficulties, and there is a 24-hour hotline that they can call at any time,” adds Miriam James.

Galenica expands home nutrition services

The Galenica Group expands its home care offering in 2019 with the acquisitions of the Bichsel Group and Curarex Swiss. The Bichsel Group specialises in the manufacture of individual medicines and medical devices as well as home care services in home nutrition and home dialysis. It also offers pain, infusion and antibiotic therapy support.

Care services in the area of home nutrition are aimed at patients who are dependent on artificial nutrition because they cannot eat normal food or because normal food is insufficient. Andrea Rohrbach, Head of Home Care at the

Three questions for Gabriëlle Duiker, Home Care Therapy Support, Mediservice**Ms Duiker, what makes a good home care nurse?**

We all have experience in dealing with acute situations, for example in emergency or intensive care medicine, as well as working with various doctors and service providers. In addition to technical skills, the ability to work independently is essential, as you are often travelling alone and are rarely able to communicate with other specialists. For this reason, all Mediservice nursing professionals meet once a month. The job is certainly demanding and requires a high degree of flexibility. But seeing the improvement we make to patients' lives with our care gives me a lot back in return.

Describe a typical working day.

There's no such thing. Every day is different. My patients can contact me at any time during my working hours if they have any questions or queries. I then try to set up a video call as promptly as possible. I try to have these types of conversations somewhere quiet if I can – preferably at home and not while travelling. Of course, I also have appointments that I arrange in advance, especially if it's an initial visit to a patient or a follow-up discussion.

Bichsel Group, explains that cancer patients, for example, are often dependent on oral nutritional supplements because they can no longer absorb all vital nutrients such as proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins or minerals from solid food. By contrast, nutritional supplements are often in liquid form and can be drunk by the patient. Bichsel supplies these medically prescribed nutrition drinks to patients once a month. A telephone conversation often takes place before the first delivery, and Bichsel's specialists are also available afterwards to answer questions or clarify issues. "Patients who ingest food directly via the gastrointestinal tract using a feeding tube (enteral nutrition) or ingest nutrients via the bloodstream using an infusion (parenteral nutrition) are closely monitored by our specialists. After registration by their doctor or hospital, an initial home visit is organised. During this visit, we clarify the patient's condition, state of health and need for care, and usually also train their family members or Spitex home carers." Depending on the patient's situation, specialists make regular follow-up visits or provide follow-up care by phone. In case of problems, patients have a 24-hour emergency number at their disposal. "This creates

a sense of security and trust for everyone," explains Andrea Rohrbach, adding: "With our care services, we can give patients back a degree of normality in their everyday lives and make a major contribution to improving their quality of life."

Unique care offering for Parkinson's patients

Curarex Swiss specialises in the care of patients with advanced Parkinson's disease. "We support and assist Parkinson's patients with drug pump therapy so that they can stay at home and not have to go to hospital. Our small team of nursing professionals is active throughout Switzerland," explains Silke Feldmann, founder and Managing Director of Curarex Swiss. In pump therapy, the drug Duodopa® is released directly into the intestine and can thus achieve a continuous effect on the target site, the brain. Curarex Swiss specialises in this Duodopa therapy.

Following registration by the responsible physician or neurologist, an initial personal exchange takes place. A discussion before the start of therapy is essential so that the patient

What has been your experience of video therapy support so far?

Both nurses and patients had to get used to video telephony in the beginning. But we have since grown to really appreciate the advantages it brings. Thanks to video therapy support, we can help patients when they have doubts by showing them procedures again or observing them administer their treatment. We can also get a first impression of problems much more quickly, which in turn means we nurses don't have to travel as often. However, video telephony is not a substitute for professional medical assessments. Sometimes, it's also necessary to visit patients and touch their skin, for example.

Patient safety and health have top priority

The health and safety of patients take top priority at Galenica. In home care, nursing professionals play a key role in ensuring this. They see to it that patients feel confident managing their therapy and administering their prescribed medication independently and correctly. They are also available around the clock in case of queries or emergencies and take an advisory function in the event of questions or problems. The home care teams of Mediservice, Bichsel and Curarex consist mainly of qualified nursing professionals who are extensively trained and have many years of experience in their specialist areas. At the Bichsel Group, dieticians also play an important role in the care of patients with oral and enteral nutrition. The expert team at Curarex Swiss consists of trained Parkinson's nurses and Parkinson's assistants with valuable experience in neurological care and treatment. At Mediservice, specialists with clinical experience and additional training in anaesthesia, intensive care or emergency care make up most of the workforce. As there is no specific training or further education for home care in Switzerland, the nursing professionals are trained internally by the individual companies. Due to the demanding nature of the work, it usually takes six months before carers are able to work independently with their patients. Regular external and internal further training, as well as specific training courses, ensure that they continually update and expand their knowledge. In addition, all three companies have a quality management system that supports employees in their daily work. Written instructions and the involvement of relatives also contribute to increased patient safety.

can decide whether the therapy is suited to them. "We discuss with the patient and their relatives the different ways in which the pump can be worn, the daily routine and other relevant aspects concerning handling of the pump." Patients who opt for pump therapy receive intensive support during the first few weeks. This includes training for the patient as well as for relatives or supporting care organisations. "We visit all our patients once every six months, as problems can often only be identified during a personal visit. In the meantime, however, we are available to patients around the clock either by phone or for home visits in the event of emergencies. We are also in close contact with their relatives," continues Silke Feldmann. "Our offering is unique in Switzerland and contributes to an improved quality of life for our patients," she stresses. The next phase will see Curarex Swiss also launch video therapy support. Silke Feldmann firmly believes that video telephony will quickly prove popular with patients as well as nurses thanks to its considerable benefits.



Acquisition of the Bichsel Group

“I greatly appreciate the cooperation with Laboratorium Dr. G. Bichsel Ltd. The individually manufactured solutions reduce sources of error at application stage, which increases patient safety.”

Dr. pharm. Enea Martinelli, Head Pharmacist
Spitäler fmi Ltd.