

Letter of Information

International Study of Medical Equipment (Maintenance, Resources and Procurement)

Shauna Mullally, a Masters of Applied Science (M. A. Sc.) candidate in the Department of Systems and Computer Engineering (SCE) at Carleton University in Canada, is conducting an international research study on the state of medical equipment in secondary and tertiary care hospitals, and how it is related to (1) the equipment maintenance department, (2) available resources, and (3) equipment procurement. Ms. Mullally is conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Monique Frize, also of the Department of SCE at Carleton University. Their research group is the Medical Informatics Research Group (MIRG), and the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) has provided a grant for this research.

The purpose of this study is to analyse how medical equipment is affected by the three areas listed above. The research aims to examine current challenges faced by you at your hospital - *not* to judge current practices. We understand you may work in a very resource-poor setting, and have little control over these challenges. A questionnaire is used to gather this information. It will ask you questions about the areas listed above, and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. You are under no obligation to participate, you may decline to answer any questions, and you may withdraw from this study at any time and request your data be destroyed.

MIRG will benefit from this research. You will benefit if you indicate that you wish to know the results of the research; the recommendations may be of use to you and your hospital! You will also benefit by being entered into a draw for one 'Handbook of Clinical Engineering' textbook, edited by Joseph Dyro, which is valued at \$130CDN. If you are the winner, communication will take place either via email or via mail in March 2008. The odds of you winning will depend on how many other participants enter the draw; currently, we are aiming for 50 responses. If you feel that your workplace security is at risk, you should not participate in this study.

Your responses will be kept confidential in the publication of research. There will not be full anonymity in the publication of research. Personal data, such as name and email address, will not be published, but other identifiable data, such as country and hospital type, may be. Data from this study will be kept secure on a MIRG computer at Carleton University, and will be stored indefinitely. If you complete the online version of this study using SurveyMonkey.com, the information you submit will be stored on SurveyMonkey's server and may be accessed by the U.S. legal and government officials, in accordance with the U.S. Patriot's Act.

This project was reviewed and received ethics clearance by the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any questions or concerns about your involvement in the study, please contact the ethics committee chair, Prof. Antonio Gualtieri. Contact information is:

Ethics Committee Chair

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**** Completed South African surveys should be faxed to 0866 729 608 ****