

A current issue related to information technology reports examples

[Health & Medicine](#), [Healthcare](#)



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Social implications of implementing electronic health records

Introduction

Electronic health records (EHRs) are patient-centered records that provide access to information instantly and securely for authorized users. First, electronic health records store patients' medical histories such as diagnoses, medications, treatment plans, immunization dates, and test results.

Secondly, electronic health records provide access to evidence-based tools that enable health care providers' base their decisions about patient care.

Thirdly, electronic health records automate and streamline health care providers' workflow. In addition, electronic health records allow sharing of information with other providers and organization such as laboratories, consultants, pharmacies, as well as clinics.

Summary of the report

The report presents the following:

- Social implications of electronic health records
- Benefits of electronic health records in reducing health care costs
- Privacy risks of electronic health records
- Mitigation measures to electronic health records privacy risks

Social implications of electronic health records

Introduction of electronic health records in the health care facilities has both positive and negative social implications. In essence, the benefits of electronic health records are more than manual records can. Electronic health records have improved quality and convenience of patient care, patient participation, accuracy of diagnoses and outcomes, care coordination, practice efficiency and reduced health costs. However, implementation of electronic health records has been associated with several social implications.

First, community health facilities serve under-privileged patients with less education, income, with more psychological and health problems.

Consequently, community health facilities are organizationally more complex with limited access to services such as mental health, dental, nutrition and health education. On the other hand, introduction of electronic health records on quality improvement adds more complexity. For example, complexity increases electronic health records related costs such as staff training and process changes.

Secondly, public health organizations tend to be short of financial resources

than private organizations. Therefore, it is difficult to hire staff required to process changes for electronic health records. Thirdly, limited resources delay adoption of electronic health records because they cannot produce adequate quality improvement gains. In addition, funding agencies provide grants with quality improvement gains for electronic health records in community healthcare centers.

How EHRs reduce health costs

Electronic health records cut health care costs to enhance efficiency. First, analysis of the data collected by electronic health records provides the best treatment methods. Therefore, electronic health records improve the standard of care.

Secondly, health care expenditure is in large part due to chronic health illnesses. Further, chronic diseases are difficult to manage. However, electronic health care records provide an avenue for organizations to develop innovative disease management solutions. In addition, information retrieved from electronic health care records is important reducing healthcare costs associated with chronic diseases. Therefore, electronic health records improve patient involvement and collaboration.

Thirdly, electronic health care records provide means to ensure information is easily accessible to users. Moreover, electronic clinical data replace old and business model service with one focused on the quality of the outcome. Finally, electronic health records provide transparency to the patients. In essence, electronic health record includes patients in the care process. For

example, the outdated system of financing healthcare was not efficient in reducing the cost of patient care.

Privacy risks of EHRs

Various privacy risks apply to electronic health records. However, there are mitigation measures to reduce privacy and security risks associated with electronic health records. First, patient information in the EHRs are subject to the risk of inappropriate access. For example, electronic records can be subject to an unscrupulous access in circumstances such as when the user account is open. In addition, electronic records are subject to network security breaches that allow hackers to gain access to the patients' confidential data.

Secondly, patients' information in the electronic health record is prone to risk of tampering. They include backdating, fraudulent entries and erasures. In addition, accessing the patients' data on the files stored in the electronic health records using the server account rather than the user account.

Thirdly, natural disasters such as fires, floods can attack physical locations of electronic health records. Consequently, they cause complete loss of electronic medical records. Furthermore, it becomes impossible to recover the affected data. In addition, electronic health records are prone to the risks of technological changes. For example, electronic records depend on computing technologies that have short cycles.

Mitigation measures of EHRs privacy risks

Mitigation measures are necessary for electronic health records to shield privacy risks. First, it is important to prevent accessing information from the

location outside the organization's control. In essence, information accessed from a location outside the organization can pose a risk. For example, laptop containing sensitive information of the organization requires protection in cases of loss and theft.

Secondly, it is necessary to ensure encryption of all transmissions. In essence, auto-faxing and emailing health information can pose a risk.

Therefore, the organization must take into account the threat of hackers.

Lastly, organizations are required to conduct staff training in order to minimize privacy risks associated with EHRs. In essence, system functions do not ensure privacy and security. Therefore, organizations should communicate policies and protocols to the staff.

Conclusion

Electronic health records are prone to privacy and security risks. For example, patient information in the electronic health records is prone to inappropriate access and tampering. Therefore, organizations are required to adopt appropriate mitigation measures such as staff training and encryption of information.

References

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