BLOGGING, NETWORKING, AND HEALTHCARE JOBS

What are Electronic Medical Records (EMR) Category: Health IT by Diana Rangaves, PharmD - March 25, 2012 | Views: 16752 | Likes: 0 | Comment: 0

More than 10 years after the Institute of Medicine (IOM) first estimated that nearly 100,000 Americans die every year from preventable medical errors, little progress has been made to implement the key reforms recommended by the IOM to improve patient Safety. Only a small fraction of health organizations in the U.S. use an electronic health record.

What is EMR?

The expressions include electronic medical record (EMR), electronic patient record (EPR), electronic health record (EHR), and computer-based patient record (CPR). This language is employed generically. It is the government's solution to make health care systems digital and connected. With a patient's consent, their health information from hospitalizations to prescription dosing can be retrieved by another medical professional. Human error is reduced to near zero.

Who uses EMR and what is the prevalence of use?

National penetration of EMRs may have reached over 90% in primary care practices in Norway, Sweden and Denmark (2003), but is only available in 17% of physician office practices in the USA (2001-2003) [HHS, 2005].

Are there any nationwide initiatives driving the adoption of EMR?

The Recovery Act alone puts $19 billion into incentive programs to reward organizations who meet "meaningful use" standards for electronic records. The Affordable Care Act builds on that, providing additional funds.

What are the benefits?

- An EMR can advance quality of care in multiple ways:
- Improving coordination of care by exchanging information.
- Supersede paper-based medical records with single, shareable, up to date, accurate, retrievable information, available anywhere at any time.
- Support integrative medicine with a range of discrete care activities including decision support, monitoring, electronic prescribing, electronic referrals, radiology, and laboratory orders and results.
- Preserve data that can be readily analyzed for medical audit, research and quality assurance, epidemiological monitoring, and disease surveillance.

What are some factors to consider before implementing EMR?

- Preparation, teaching, coaching, instruction and guidance is vital prior to go-live.
- Well-designed EMR strategy should include concurrently developing and maintaining IT infrastructure.
- Long-term education, training and supportive resources are needed.
- Collaboration and buy-in by stake-holders is essential.
- Any perceived lack of benefit by stake-holders should be addressed.

What does the future hold?

Integrative medicine and coordination of care are indispensable across all healthcare systems. EMR contributes to more effective patient care, overall management and communication, and promotes staff development.

Related Articles and Reference

EMR~ MASTER CLASSROOM Electronic Medical Records (download)

"To Err Is Human, To Delay Is Deadly," May 2009 .

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