Does Integrated EHR System Assure Safety Patient Management?

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Abstract and Objective

To argue about a recent attack towards a policy to develop integrative networked Electronic Health Record (EHR) system as a basis for cooperation among care teams and with patients and in support of care for patient safety in Japan.

Keywords:

Electronic Health Record (EHR) system, Data use, Patient Data Protection, Confidential Information, Disclosure.

Introduction

Though the EHR is expected to decrease the variation in record quality, there is still no consensus on its social role. The idea that it is just the computerized version of the paper record still prevails. In our view, it will be necessary to develop it beyond that into the key medium for interaction of specialists in medical care.

Methods

As the basis for our work, two questionnaire surveys were executed by the author headed commission developing policy for Health Record structure and its computerization (E-Chart Taskforce). One survey assessed the attitudes towards a next step of EHR system in the Hiroshima university hospital and its affiliate hospitals. The other survey assessed the current state of safety management of EHR systems in the hospitals certified by Japan Council for Quality Health Care (JCQHC).

Results

The survey of the above hospitals showed that most have computer supported administrative procedures, but only few computer-based health records. The attitudes of the Hiroshima EHR users show that while they expect efficiency and quality improvements, there is also apprehension that the system in use might lower practical efficiency and compromise patient safety. Accordingly, health recording requirements and storage policy have been restructured and communicated to the hospitals.

Conclusion

Despite our effort to reflect the care process in the system operation, the current system in the opinion of medical staff is so complicated and unusable that it might impinge on operational efficiency and threaten patient safety. We are guided by the notion that the standardization of the EHR will lead to standardizing the safety of the healthcare process.
In order for the standardized EHR to become the basic medium for the interaction of specialists and patients in the practice process, we have to comprehend the EHR from the perspective of safety and quality of healthcare and reevaluate its computerization to arrive at a better blueprint for the next generation health system, which is worth while to disclose for patients.

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