

# Health Care Managers' Perspectives on Intercultural Privacy Concerns

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# Overview of Study

- Methods of health care communication have developed rapidly over centuries
- EMRs are being mandated through president Obama's health care reform policy
- Potential cultural and language barriers need to be considered before implementation

# Participants

- Convenience Sample
- Members of the Clinical Services Team
- Additional departments recruited as see fit

# Methods

- Interviews were conducted with 11 health care managers from various departments at Bridgeport Hospital
- Participants answered predefined and open-ended questions on cultural aspects of the privacy and electronic medical records
- Qualitative analysis was performed to assess the data

# Methods (Cont'd)

- Responses to interview questions were categorized by question
- Similar answers were then be grouped together and common themes identified and analyzed
- Goal of analysis was to gain a better understanding of health care managers' perspectives of EMRs and the challenges involved in ensuring cultural issues are addressed

# Results

- Cultural and/or language barriers in adapting to EMRs
  - Culture and language barriers do not significantly affect how culturally diverse patients adapt to EMRs
  - Use of computers identified as a key area for concern
    - Translation of patient information to a different language
    - System limitations

# Results (Cont'd)

- Intercultural communication exchanges and privacy impacts of EMRs
  - Processes for conducting patient/health care provider interactions with culturally diverse patients and maintaining patient privacy would not change.
  - Potential for EMR technology to highlight topics for health care professionals to address with patients.

# Results (Cont'd)

- EMRs and the protection of patient privacy
  - Patient privacy protections in place for EMRs are equal to protections offered by paper-based records.
  - Positive aspects of EMRs are the ability to require secure passwords in order to access data.
  - Negative aspect notes computer screens displaying patient information in hallways.
  - HIPAA now requires mandatory audits and breeches can be prosecuted.

# Results (Cont'd)

- Other concerns regarding culturally diverse patients and the implementation of EMRs
  - Importance of providing information at each stage of implementation.
  - Allowing all patients to provide comments, and offering training.
  - Sensitivity to diverse cultures.

# Discussion

- Primary purpose of this study was to investigate the intercultural privacy concerns faced by health care managers when implementing EMRs
- Understanding EMRs takes time and training
- Non-English speaking patients face many challenges
- So do health care managers and providers

# Privacy concerns

- “The right to be let alone”
- Is Too Much Privacy Bad for Your Health?

Sources: Gangloff, M. (2007, December 30). Legislating Privacy: How open should information be? *The Roanoke Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.roanoke.com/vtinvestigation/wb/145207>

Scott, C. (2000). Is Too Much Privacy Bad for Your Health? An Introduction to the Law, Ethics, and HIPAA Rule on Medical Privacy. *Georgia State University Law Review*, 17, 481-530.

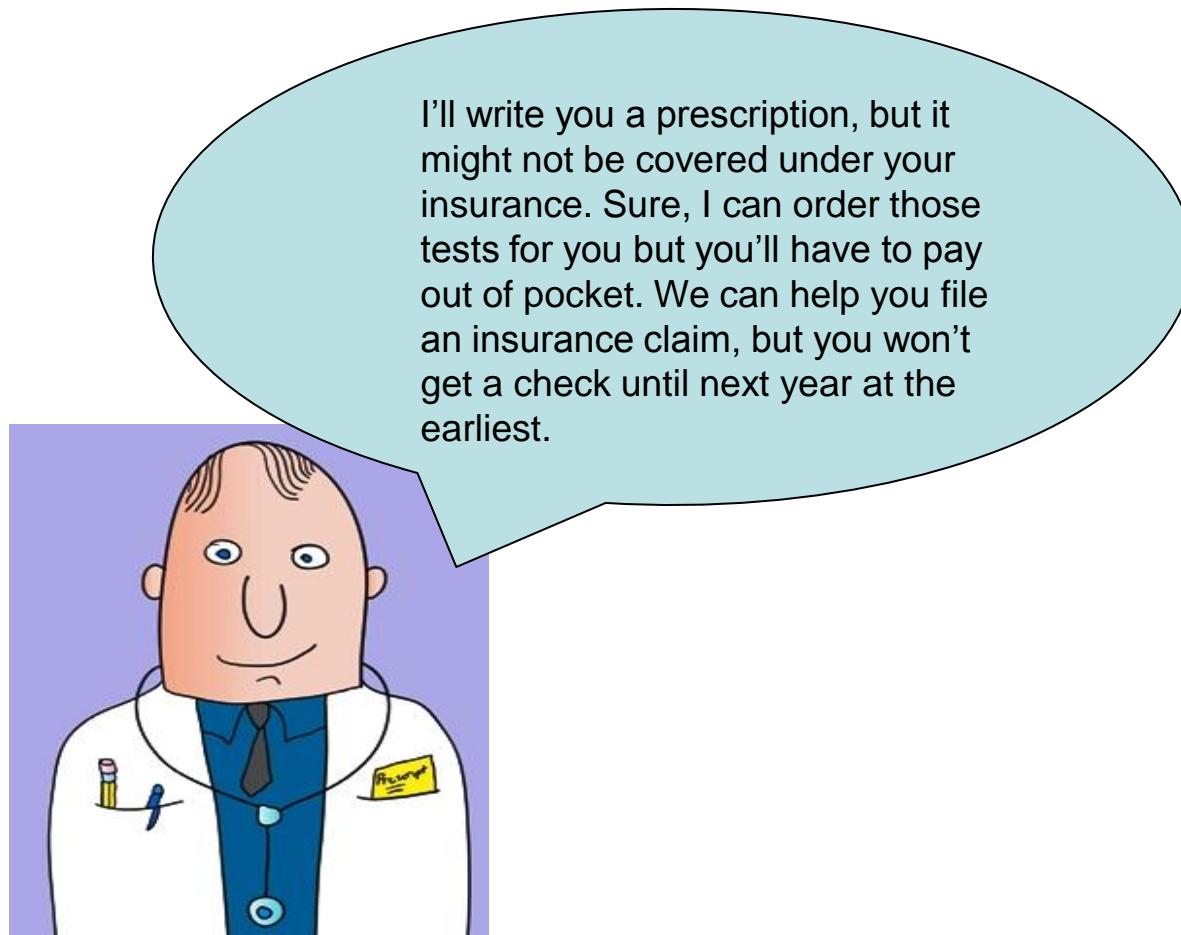
# HIPAA and EMRs

- HIPAA prohibits medical providers from sharing records without a patient's permission except when necessary for treatment. Non-compliance has consequences.
- EMRs require common sense and basic steps:
  - Put your computer server in a secure room that's locked
  - Use an EMR with user management and permissions
  - Make regular back-ups and store them in a secure place
  - Employ a computer specialist

# How do you manage EHRs?



# Power, privacy and medical records



# Electronic medical records and the future

- Electronic medical records are the wave of the future—manage your own medical files and take control, but be aware of privacy issues
- Critics of patient privacy have argued that patients should not have such strictly regulated protected medical records; that too much privacy can be bad for your health.
- Americans feel a strong sense of entitlement to health care privacy, even though most are unaware how often and to how many parties their information is routinely disclosed.
- The medical privacy debate will continue, but open communication among patients and providers, regardless of age or culture, and adherence to privacy laws, will give a patient the best medical care possible.

# **Thank You!**