

**100% Online, No GMAT**[Learn More](#)Online
Master of Science in
Healthcare Informatics[HealthITAnalytics.com](#) > [Articles](#) > [Awareness of patient safety risks from health IT is "limited"](#)

Awareness of patient safety risks from health IT is "limited"

Author Name [Jennifer Bresnick](#) | Date [July 16, 2014](#) | Tagged [Analytics](#) [Infrastructure](#), [Hospital](#)Quality, [Patient Safety](#)

Healthcare providers have a poor grasp of the impact EHRs and other health IT on patient safety, says a [new RAND Corporation report](#), and few organizations have the willingness or the resources to devote to implementing new tools or workflows that can address the critical issue. Cultural challenges and poor communication between stakeholders, as well as a lack of incentives for providers to focus on health IT safety, have combined with limited awareness to push the problem onto the back burner, where patients continue to be put at risk due to improper usage of the burgeoning digital healthcare system.

**Get The Latest News And
Real Word Advice On:**

- Predictive Analytics
- Patient Care
- Population Health
- Big Data
- Healthcare BI
- And More

Visit [HealthITAnalytics.com](#) And
Sign Up For Our **FREE** Newsletter

While [patient safety advocates](#) have been warning of the dangers posed by EHRs for many years, the increasing levels of adoption and demands for more complex, detailed use of the systems spurred on by Stage 2 of meaningful use may raise the risks further. With the advent of clinical decision support tools and clinical analytics software that purport to make [population health management](#) and predictive decision making easier, providers are relying more wholly on health IT systems without paying much heed to the risks that may be lurking

under the surface.

To assess the problems facing the healthcare system, the ONC funded a pilot project run by RAND, the ECRI Institute, the University of Texas, and Baylor College of Medicine to evaluate the implementation of patient safety programs in eleven healthcare organizations.

The findings were somewhat worrying. While the pilot aimed to diagnose hidden problems through a standardized self-assessment, healthcare organizations were less likely to focus on issues discovered through the survey than those problems they marked as "previously known." Few organizations were willing to tackle problems that fell outside of their current priorities and initiatives, and most providers were only interested in health IT safety issues that somehow impacted their participation in programs with some financial component, such as meaningful use or quality-based reimbursement programs.

"Organizations tended to view health IT as a solution to patient safety problems, while overlooking the potential of health IT to contribute to safety problems or to create new types of safety risks," the report explains. "Organizations installing, expanding, or upgrading EHRs are focused on ensuring that systems are operational and support necessary functions and that staff have sufficient training to use EHRs meaningfully. While these concerns clearly have implications for patient safety, the new safety risks associated with the implementation and use of health IT, especially EHRs, were not perceived in general as requiring focused effort."

Ambulatory practices encountered greater challenges when committing to a health IT safety improvement program, including a lack of resources and the inability of executive leadership to appropriately prioritize or recognize the effort involved. The study notes that strong

**Download The Latest
White Papers And
Webcasts On:**

- BYOD
- Single Sign On
- Data Security
- HIPAA Compliance
- And More

**VISIT THE HEALTH IT SECURITY
WHITE PAPER LIBRARY TODAY.**

IT Analytics Newsletter

Your email

[▶ sign up](#)

IT Analytic Topics

- ▶ [Clinical Analytics](#)
- ▶ [Population Health Management](#)
- ▶ [Healthcare Analytics Vendor News](#)
- ▶ [Applied Analytics](#)
- ▶ [Healthcare Analytics](#)
- ▶ [Medical Research](#)
- ▶ [Quality of Care](#)
- ▶ [Big Data](#)

leadership was the key to successful improvement programs, and required coordination and engagement from many different areas of the organization in order to get off the ground.

“Risk management staff, quality and safety officers, and IT staff had to redirect attention and resources from current operations and health IT projects with looming deadlines (such as accomplishing meaningful use certification or planning for the ICD-10 transition) to pursue these risk mitigation projects,” the study notes. Organizations with a prior interest in patient safety and a cultural acceptance of the need for ongoing improvement were most likely to take advantage of the opportunity to change.

While organizations struggled to tackle health IT safety issues on their own, many recognized the benefit of bringing in external consultants or facilitators to conduct improvement programs and provide technical assistance. The report adds that there is an “urgent” need for tools and benchmarking metrics to help detect, address, and monitor patient safety risks associated with health IT systems. Stronger incentives for change may help spur improvement programs, and it is also critical to engage health IT vendors to develop safer products.

Related White Papers:

- [Top 10 Considerations when Selecting a Secure Text Messaging Solution](#)
- [CIO's Guide to Secure Text Messaging](#)
- [Protecting Digitalized Assets in Healthcare](#)
- [Top 5 Takeaways From HIPAA Omnibus Audits](#)
- [HIPAA Compliance Statement](#)
- [Browse all White Papers](#)

Related Articles:

- [Truven Analytics rescinds awards to sanctioned CA hospitals](#)
- [Hospitals providing inappropriate treatment for infections](#)
- [Study: Thyroid cancer is over-diagnosed and over-treated](#)
- [ONC releases EHR patient safety guides and tools](#)
- [Performance analytics for residents help quality benchmarking](#)

- [Patient Care](#)
- [Clinical Intelligence](#)
- [Analytics Infrastructure](#)
- [Patient Data](#)

Download The Latest White Papers And Webcasts On:

- [BYOD](#)
- [Single Sign On](#)
- [Data Security](#)
- [HIPAA Compliance](#)
- [And More](#)

VISIT THE HEALTH IT SECURITY WHITE PAPER LIBRARY TODAY.

@HITAnalytics

Tweets [Follow](#)

HealthITAnalytics @HITAnalytics 1h
#CareCoordination pilot will create #ClinicalAnalytics dashboard | #PopHealth #ChronicDiseaseManagement #HealthIT bit.ly/1r2rHUT

HealthITAnalytics @HITAnalytics 2h

Tweet to @HITAnalytics

You must be to post a comment.

Concerned about the RISK associated with your Business Associates?

Take a 5 question assessment to understand your overall risk [Take Now](#)

