

NURSING STAFF ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS REGARDING THE USE OF  
COMPUTERS AND EMRS IN HEALTHCARE PRE- AND POST-  
IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EMR

Sharon McLane, RN, MBA  
The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center  
1515 Holcombe Boulevard, Box 82  
Houston, Texas 77030-4095

EMR; attitudes; opinions

Purpose: To identify the attitudes related to the use of computers in healthcare and the opinions of electronic medical records (EMR) of nursing staff prior to implementation of an EMR system. The same assessment was conducted after implementation to determine how the attitudes and opinions may have changed after using an EMR. Literature has demonstrated that attitudes and opinions of staff influence buy-in and use of an EMR system. The opinions and attitudes of nursing staff significantly influence the opinions and EMR utilization of other healthcare providers. EMR systems have a major potential to support research, quality improvement, and practice if they are used in the manner intended. If the EMR is not used as intended, the data retrieved is of limited value and could result in harm.

Method: A survey tool was distributed by interoffice mail to all nursing staff on the inpatient units; registered nurses, licensed vocation nurses, nursing assistants, managers, clinical nurse specialists, and clerical staff. Each of the target groups would be an EMR user. The survey tool included seven questions related to attitudes to computer use in healthcare; seven questions regarding opinions regarding EMR systems; four questions about personal experience with computers; and four demographics questions. Responses were anonymous and collected in pre-addressed envelopes via interoffice mail.

Findings: Cronbach's-Alpha for internal consistency of the questions was 0.9074. Analysis of the pilot survey has been completed, data for the full pre-implementation survey has been entered in SPSS, and the post-implementation surveys have been returned.

The pilot survey revealed that staff held generally positive attitudes about use of computers in healthcare and generally positive opinions about EMR systems. Of note was that over 27% of the staff perceived use of computers to be a boring function, 70% expressed concerns about increased monitoring of providers using computers, 57% identified that an EMR could be a risk to patient confidentiality,, 43% do not believe computer decision support augments nursing professionalism, and 23% perceive that computer use increases nursing workload. Nearly 23% of the staff did not perceive the presence of computers at the patient bedside to be important, and over 11% did not believe there was a utility to computer support in care planning. Strong correlations at the 0.001 significance level were noted (>0.895) between several indicators. Analysis of the full pre-implementation and post-implementation data will be included in the poster.

Discussion: The data from the pilot unit findings were used to define the process employed to develop and design nursing documentation in the EMR system. The findings influenced the degree of invited staff participation in design, the communication process and content, and the training program design.