

Researchers develop advanced search tool to help physician's sort and retrieve vital EMR data

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Researchers at one of the top five hospitals in the United States have developed an advanced search tool called the Queriable Patient Inference Dossier (QPID) that helps radiologists and other physicians extract useful data from a patient's electronic medical record (EMR) in a timely and efficient manner, according to an article in the August issue of the *Journal of the American College of Radiology*.

"Even in its simplest implementation, the presence of an EMR system presents considerable challenges to the [radiologist](#)," said Michael Zalis, MD, lead author of the study. "For example, radiologists commonly encounter each patient with little prior familiarity with the patient's clinical situation. As a result, the time and effort required to retrieve, review, and assimilate EMR data relevant for the case at hand becomes an important consideration for use of EMR in busy clinical practice," said Zalis.

In order to address this issue, in 2005, researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, MA, initiated the development of the programmable search system QPID for their institution's EMR. "QPID is a search engine that serves as an adjunct to our hospital's EMR system; it was developed separately from the EMR and operates in a read-only fashion in relation to it. Thus QPID is not a source of new EMR data, but serves as a method to extract useful patterns of EMR data from the separately curated clinical data repositories at our institution," said Zalis.

QPID currently serves 500 registered users at Massachusetts General and posts 7-10 thousand pages of medical record data daily.

"Advanced search tools can extend the radiologist's awareness of a patient's clinical history and care record, and in some instances automating these tools may augment the value, quality, and safety of practice," he said.

"The potential impact of advanced EMR [search tools](#) is by no means limited to radiology and in fact many departments in the hospital and outpatient clinic may benefit from these capabilities. In our own institution, with the QPID search system, we have catalyzed a growing base of enthusiastic users, many of whom have contributed their own insights and content to the system's catalogue of search modules, each of which is potentially applicable at more than one site. The future for advanced search of the EMR looks to be exciting and full of potential," said Zalis.

More information: www.jacr.org

Provided by American College of Radiology

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