

Making light work of the workload for overworked healthcare workers

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Modern hospitals are staffed by overworked and overstressed healthcare workers, according to a research paper published in the *International Journal of Biomedical Engineering and Technology*. As such, new technology must be implemented to reduce the number of treatment errors that arise because of this.

Uta Herter of the University of Hohenheim, Stuttgart, Germany, suggests that circumstances conspire to lead to reduced efficiency and put the quality of patient care at risk in busy hospitals with a large number of patients and a limited number of trained staff to treat them. An information technology approach to improving hospital processes could help reduce the number of incorrect pharmaceutical prescriptions given, the cases of surgical operations performed on the wrong body part or on the wrong patient, loss of foreign bodies inside patients and other scenarios. The same technology might also address the apparently simpler problems of late or missed consultations or nursing attendance on a patient.

With appropriate and regular training, Herter suggests that the advantages and benefits of IT solutions in hospitals such as the use of RFID ([radio frequency identification](#)) tags and healthcare management and dispensing software and [electronic health records](#) (EHR) can be made clear. This would lead to greater compliance with such improved systems among [healthcare workers](#) and auxiliary staff who may otherwise be reluctant to swap traditional approaches for technological methods.

Herter has reviewed the various technologies that are available to hospitals, including the well-known business intelligence software known as QlikView, which might can used in a healthcare environment.

"Innovations regarding new IT technologies need to be promoted; their transferability to the medical field must be proven," explains Herter.

"Only in this way is it possible to implement the implication of facilitation and support of the implementation of new and innovative IT-based concepts, like QlikView, RFID technology and EHRs, in hospitals, improve the healthcare services and thus contribute to the most important good for every individual - health.

More information: Herter, U. (2014) 'Medical treatment errors in hospitals: information technology-based concepts to limit their occurrence', *Int. J. Biomedical Engineering and Technology*, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp.317–340.

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