

Doctors spend half of workday in the electronic health record

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Primary care physicians spend more than one-half of their workday interacting with the electronic health record during and after clinic hours.

Based on data from EHR event logs (an automated tracking feature) and confirmed by direct observation data, researchers from the University of Wisconsin and the American Medical Association found that physicians spent 355 minutes (5.9 hours) of an 11.4 hour workday in the EHR, including 269 minutes (4.5 hours) during clinic hours and 86 minutes (1.4 hours) after hours.

Almost half of their total EHR time per day (44 percent) was devoted to clerical tasks and an additional 84 minutes per day (24 percent) was spent managing the inbox. Time spent on EHR activities differed by time of day on weekdays and weekends, with weekend EHR work peaking around 10:00 am and 10:00 pm. A number of factors contribute to [physician](#) burnout and increased workload related to the EHR, the authors explain.

This includes the amount of time required for documentation (84 minutes) and order entry (43 minutes), as well as the inefficiency and distraction of communicating with team members through the EHR instead of verbally.

The authors contend that solutions for common problems in primary care, such as proactive planned care, team-based care, and sharing of clerical tasks, require thoughtful EHR system applications.

More information: <http://www.annfammed.org/content/15/5/419.full>

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