

EHRs take up substantial time for ophthalmologists

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(HealthDay)—A substantial portion of the time that ophthalmologists

spend with patients is spent on electronic health record (EHR) use, according to a study published online Oct. 12 in *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Sarah Read-Brown, from the Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, and colleagues used medical record time stamps and an EHR audit to examine 27 ophthalmologists' time spent on EHR use at a single center (Sept. 1, 2013, through Dec. 31, 2016). In addition, manual time-motion observation was used to measure the length of time spent directly with patients on EHR use, conversation, and examination.

The researchers found that the mean total ophthalmologist examination time was 11.2 minutes per patient, of which 27 percent was spent on EHR use, 42 percent on conversation, and 31 percent on examination. Per encounter, the mean total ophthalmologist time spent using the EHR was 10.8 minutes (range, 5.8 to 28.6 minutes). There was a positive association between EHR use and billing level and a negative association between EHR use per encounter and clinic volume in a mixed-effects model. For ophthalmologists with high mean billing levels, each additional encounter per clinic was associated with a decrease of 1.7 minutes (95 percent confidence interval, -4.3 to 1) of EHR use time per [encounter](#) (P = 0.01).

"Ophthalmologists have limited time with [patients](#) during office visits, and EHR use requires a substantial portion of that time. There is variability in EHR use patterns among [ophthalmologists](#)," conclude the authors.

One author disclosed financial ties to Novartis.

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