

Study: How to get patients to share electronic health records

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Credit: University at Buffalo

Education is the key to getting patients to share their medical records electronically with health care providers, according to a new study from the University at Buffalo School of Management.

Published in the *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, the study found that while patient education has typically focused on the benefits of electronic records, [privacy concerns](#) are what keep most from signing up.

"When a patient decides not to share their records electronically, it can result in increased costs, medical errors and undesired health outcomes," says study co-author Lawrence Sanders, PhD, professor of [management science](#) and systems in the UB School of Management. "But patients are more concerned about privacy, and health care providers should make it a priority to let them know about all the policies and security measures in place to protect them."

By making patients more aware of existing privacy policies and [security measures](#) in place, health care providers create an environment where patients are more likely to share their personal health information, and therefore still able to achieve cost and error reduction benefits, the researchers say.

The authors analyzed results of a nationwide health survey with more than 1,600 participants, which included questions about health conditions and lifestyles, intention to share personal health information and more. Beyond patient education, they found that educating [health care providers](#) is just as important.

"Physicians need to know how important their relationships are with the people who come to them for care," says Joana Gaia, PhD, clinical assistant professor of management science and systems in the UB School of Management. "As doctors spend more time with patients and involve them in decision-making processes, they will be more willing to share their [medical records](#) electronically—and see the benefits of doing so."

Provided by University at Buffalo

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