

Technology has the potential to change the patient-provider relationship

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Credit: Regenstrief Institute

Healthcare technology continues to evolve and has the potential to significantly change the relationship between providers and their patients. A study from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Regenstrief Institute and Indiana University School of Medicine analyzed perspectives on personal health records.

Personal health records are different from [electronic health records](#) because they are used by the patient as opposed to the provider. They are

sometimes referred to as patient portals and allow the patient to see test results, medications and other [health information](#).

The research team interviewed providers, patients and caregivers associated with the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center about their thoughts on personal health records and how they could be used.

"During the interviews, patients expressed the potential for personal health records to deepen their relationship with their provider and to allow them to be more understood. Physicians were interested in having more clinical information sharing to facilitate better care," said study author David Haggstrom, M.D., MAS, director of the Regenstrief Institute Center for Health Services Research, core investigator at the VA Health Services Research and Development (HSR&D) Center for Health Information and Communication (CHIC) and associate professor of medicine at IU School of Medicine. "These different visions of the value of these records show the need for discussions between physicians and patients to set expectations about the uses of PHRs."

Both doctors and patients raised concerns about workflow.

"Patient portals have already created an additional strain on medical staff, and patients are sensitive to that. Careful thought needs to be given to how [health systems](#) and teams deploy PHRs to still provide patient-centered care," said Dr. Haggstrom.

The next steps for [personal health records](#) involve implementing them more widely, tailoring them for specific conditions and making them more user-friendly.

Dr. Haggstrom is currently leading a five-year clinical trial using a personal health record created specifically for cancer [patients](#). The research team will be looking at both the quality of care and the impact

on the patient-provider relationship.

The research is published in *JMIR Human Factors*.

More information: David A Haggstrom et al, Uses of Personal Health Records for Communication Among Colorectal Cancer Survivors, Caregivers, and Providers: Interview and Observational Study in a Human-Computer Interaction Laboratory, *JMIR Human Factors* (2021). [DOI: 10.2196/16447](https://doi.org/10.2196/16447)

Provided by Regenstrief Institute

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