

# New EHR-embedded survey tool may increase research efficiency, decrease costs of gathering data

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A new study reports on the development and implementation of digital survey methods that could replace a form of paper-based surveys, known

as card studies, in clinic-based research. While card studies are useful for collecting data at the point of care, traditional paper-based methods can be costly and complicated. Additionally, clinical workflows require that card studies be brief, making it challenging to obtain the rich demographic and contextual data required for meaningful analyses using paper-based methods.

Researchers developed and tested a digital parallel to these paper card studies, embedding the tool into the clinic's electronic health record and thus reducing the complexity for participants. In addition, [data collection](#) became more meaningful as each participant's responses were linked to clinic and patient [data](#).

Each survey took less than one minute to complete. When data collection was finalized, survey responses were removed from the EHR and did not become part of the patient's legal medical record. At the end of implementation, participating clinicians had completed 79% of all card requests. The authors posit that future EHR-embedded [surveys](#) could replicate and automate much of the time-intensive development, which may increase research efficiency and substantially decrease survey-related labor costs.

The research was published in *The Annals of Family Medicine*.

**More information:** Arwen Bunce et al, Designing and Implementing an Electronic Health Record–Embedded Card Study in Primary Care: Methods and Considerations, *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.1370/afm.2818](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2818)

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