



## 9 top hospital IT threats in 2019



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ECRI Institute has recently released its annual list of top healthcare technology threats that hospitals could face in 2019. Is dealing with these risks high on your list of priorities?

### **Hackers can take advantage of remote access to systems leading to disruption of healthcare operations.**

Publicly accessible systems are easier for criminals to exploit to expose patient data and disrupt operations.

**Action:** Identify and keep strict surveillance over remote points of access points, and have a strict cyber security policy in place.

### **Sponges left inside a patient continue to be a surgical complication, in spite of manual counts.**

It's common practice to manually count surgical sponges following an operation but, still, there are errors with retained sponges.

**Action:** Consider technologies that supplement manual counting.

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### **Ventilator alarms that are improperly set put patients at risk for hypoxic brain injury or death.**

It is a simple step to set an alarm to alert staff when a patient ventilator disconnects or leaks but many hospitals don't have working alarms.

**Action:** Establish a routine ventilator inspection procedure and policies on when to set alarms.

### **Mishandling flexible endoscopes after disinfection increases risk of patient infections.**

Even thoroughly disinfected, flexible scopes can spread infections if they're not dried properly with this risk rising when they are handled with unclean gloves.

**Action:** Establish strict routine for cleaning, drying and handling scopes.

### **Confusing dose rate with flow rate can lead to infusion pump medication errors.**

Confusing these two critical rates can lead to high-risk medical administration errors.

**Action:** Auto-programme infusion pumps, and implement regular employee training on where to enter dose rates and flow rates to avoid serious errors.

### **Improper customisation of physiologic monitor alarm settings can lead to missed alarms.**

Too many alarms can lead to alarm fatigue while too few can put patients' lives at risk.

**Action:** Train staff in how to set these alarms, and touch base with vendors about tools they offer that can mitigate the impact of multiple alarms.

### **Injury risk from overhead patient lift systems.**

Poorly-installed patient lifts can cause more problems than they aim to solve.

**Action:** Undertake systems test after installation and perform regular maintenance to ensure lifts are in working condition.

### **Cleaning fluid seeps into electrical components can increase risk of equipment damage and fires.**

Cleaning and disinfection of equipment is essential but quantity and application of fluid can cause damage.

**Action:** Stick to manufacturer instructions, and squeeze out excess liquid from sponges or cloths before using them.

### **Flawed battery charging systems and practices can affect device operation.**

An improperly-charged device can lead to serious problems.

**Action:** Ensure that equipment has functioning battery gauges so it is clear when charging is necessary.

Source: ECRI

Image credit:

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