

EHRs Effect on Health Care Team Communication, Function, and Well-being



Team functioning and communication play a critical role in clinician and physician well-being, and constitute major aspects of a healthy workplace culture. The electronic health record (EHR) affects communication, well-being, and teamwork. This paper tries to layout the interplay between the electronic health record (EHR), health care team relations, and physician well-being.

In this qualitative study comprising 73 attending and resident physicians, the team analysed the ways in which the EHR affected: (1) team communication, (2) team function, and (3) team member well-being.

EHR Association with Communication

Many physicians reported that the EHR became the primary mode of communication between clinicians.

Several physicians highlighted that communication mediated by the EHR has weakened the relationships between members of care teams. Additionally, it has lessened the number of human interactions, causing them to lose sight of the mutual goals and purpose of a care team.

However, EHR dependence has increased the ease of task-oriented communication allowing team members to work together more efficiently; they can communicate efficiently with colleagues about scheduling, administrative, and simple clinical issues.

EHR Association with Team Function

Physicians highlighted that the EHR has presented a new set of tasks and responsibilities, with physicians regarding other clinicians as EHR managers rather than care team members.

Clinical expectations around EHR-related communication has a negative impact on physician workload, which inevitably leads to heightened stress.

The rapid implementation of EHR-related communication platforms was not accompanied by best practice guidelines. As a result, care team members must ensure they are appropriately engaging with their colleagues, and ensure they do not send extraneous messages because they have the means to.

EHR Association with Team Member Well-being

In-person communication and human connection with patients and colleagues are fundamental to the well-being of physicians. Many have highlighted that EHR is responsible for minimising this aspect of their work life.

The EHR design can also create challenges and impact the frustration levels of physicians, which in-turn has an effect on their interactions with colleagues.

The EHR supports task-oriented and efficient communication among team members to deliver the best care for patients. However, the results highlight the need for in-person interaction – a critical aspect for a healthy workplace culture.

As we will see greater integration of health information technology in care delivery, future research should explore interventions to maintain the human element.

Source: [JAMA](#)

Image Credit: [iStock](#)

Published on : Fri, 26 May 2023