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US Hospitals Extremely Slow To Adopt Electronic Health Records, Study Shows

In a new study, researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), Massachusetts General Hospital and George Washington University found that less than 2% of surveyed hospitals had implemented comprehensive EHR; further, less than 8% had basic EHR in place. It is the first nationally representative study of the prevalence of EHR in hospitals.

The findings are significant as Congress and the Obama administration targeted \$19 billion in the federal stimulus package for improving adoption of health information technology such as electronic health records. Many policy makers hope that the money will help doctors and hospitals adopt electronic records, which should help improve the quality and efficiency of the healthcare system.

"This study suggests hospitals have a long way to go in achieving widespread EHR adoption and use" said Ashish Jha, associate professor of health policy and management at HSPH and lead author of the study. "The \$19 billion in the stimulus bill is really just a down payment for getting us to a healthcare system that is fully electronic and can deliver the kind of care Americans deserve."

The national survey, conducted in 2008, was sent to all acute-care hospitals that are members of the American Hospital Association; responses came from 2,952 hospitals, or approximately 63% of the membership.

"Comprehensive" EHR was defined by an expert panel as having 24 functionalities

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