



UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Medicine
Community Health Sciences

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PHYSICIAN INTEGRATED NETWORK IMPROVING PRIMARY CARE

Electronic medical records (EMRs) help family doctors provide better care to their patients. Without these records it's difficult to measure what kind of care patients receive, according to a report from the University of Manitoba.

Manitoba Health asked researchers at the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP), a research unit in the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Medicine, to look for patterns among groups of patients in the Physician Integrated Network (PIN). The PIN initiative was started by Manitoba Health to help family physicians who use EMRs provide better care to their patients.

PIN aims to improve patients' access to doctors and interdisciplinary teams while creating a system to manage information more effectively so doctors can make better decisions.

"This study created a unique opportunity by comparing the population health information in our data Repository with electronic medical records at the four participating clinics," says Dr. Alan Katz, lead researcher at MCHP for the PIN evaluation.

"We found improvements in the use of electronic medical records by helping to define criteria for the use of standard fields. This allows doctors to make better use of their own EMRs and helps manage chronic conditions and the overall health of their patients," says Katz.

Family doctors can use information from EMRs to graph patients' health by measuring weight, blood pressure, and so on with each visit. The same techniques can be used to monitor chronic conditions such as diabetes and more importantly, measurements can be taken on how patients respond to treatment.

Dr. Cornie Woelk is a family physician with nearly 22 years experience at the Dr. C.W. Wiebe Medical Centre in Winkler, Manitoba. “Although we had electronic medical records for 10 years, we had not actually used them to evaluate how well we were doing,” says Woelk. “Because of PIN we’re able to use EMR tools to help us implement reminders and generate reports to improve the management of our patients. Overall this has been a positive experience for our clinic. Working along other healthcare providers has been very helpful in implementing change, and move us all forward.”

MCHP is a research unit in the Department of Community Health Sciences in the Faculty of Medicine, at the University of Manitoba. Research scientists and their collaborators at MCHP study health services, population and public health, and the social determinants of health using data from the entire population of Manitoba. Most of the research is oriented towards answering questions of interest to policy makers in Manitoba based on a formal association with Manitoba Health and input from other government departments.



The summary and full report will be available for download on Wednesday, August 9 from <http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/deliverablesList.html>

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