

EHR SURVEY

EHR Trends and Challenges

MRI's survey finds workflow and record access among top IT-manager concerns.

by Jeff Blair

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The Medical Records Institute (MRI), Newton, Mass., has compiled the results of its Fifth Annual Survey of Electronic Health Record (EHR) Trends and Usage, conducted from April 15 to May 23, 2003. The results reflect the responses of 759 individuals employed within healthcare provider settings.

The survey posed questions related to incentives behind EHR system implementation, EHR applications and functions being implemented or planned, and many other topics. Among the compelling insights revealed were the importance of improving workflow as a motivator for implementing EHRs, the significant growth in EHR implementation in ambulatory settings, and the differences in concerns about privacy and security according to market segment or respondent role.

Workflow motivation

This year, the response "facilitate workflow improvement" was added as a choice for the question, "What are the major factors that are driving the need for EHR systems from a management/ administrative perspective?" Although the option was listed ninth out of 10 in the questionnaire, respondents apparently had no trouble finding it. Improved workflow was ranked No. 1 among the motivating factors (see [figure 1](#)), selected by 82.5 percent of total respondents. IT managers and professionals rated it even higher--at 85.2 percent. Non-IT managers ranked it at 82.5 percent, and physicians and nurses ranked it at 75.7 percent (second only to "improve patient safety").

Ambulatory ups its pace

Survey results also showed evidence that the ambulatory market segments are catching up with the hospital and integrated health delivery service organization (IHDSO) market segments--in their levels of motivation for implementing EHRs, in their actual levels of implementation and in their plans for future implementations. These trends are illustrated by the ambulatory market's:

- Significant increase over last year in the level of motivation for implementing EHRs in solo and small practices
- Increase in the use of almost all data capture methods (especially structured data entry)
- Relatively high level of implementation plans for e-prescribing and other applications, remote access to EHRs, and order entry placed by nurses or staff

Privacy and security

The survey also revealed major differences in the levels of concern about privacy and security when responses were analyzed by market segment and by respondent role. For example, when the question, "What are your major concerns regarding the privacy and security of patient record information?" was analyzed by market segment (see [figure 2](#)), the hospital and IHDSO segments selected "inappropriate access to patient record information by authorized users" as the top choice. In contrast, the major concern in the ambulatory segment was "compliance with HIPAA privacy and security regulations."

When the same question was analyzed by respondent role (see [figure 2](#)), IT managers and professionals were most concerned about "inappropriate access to patient record information by authorized users," whereas non-IT managers had a greater level of concern about "access to patient record information by unauthorized users." The greatest concern among physicians and nurses was "compliance with HIPAA privacy and security regulations."

More findings

An overview of the survey, including demographic information, the questions posed and overall results, is available free for public review at www.medrecinst.com. The comprehensive version, which may be ordered at the same site, adds trends and market shifts, additional analysis of results, names of vendors identified by respondents for specific EHR applications, and many more details, with a summary of major observations.

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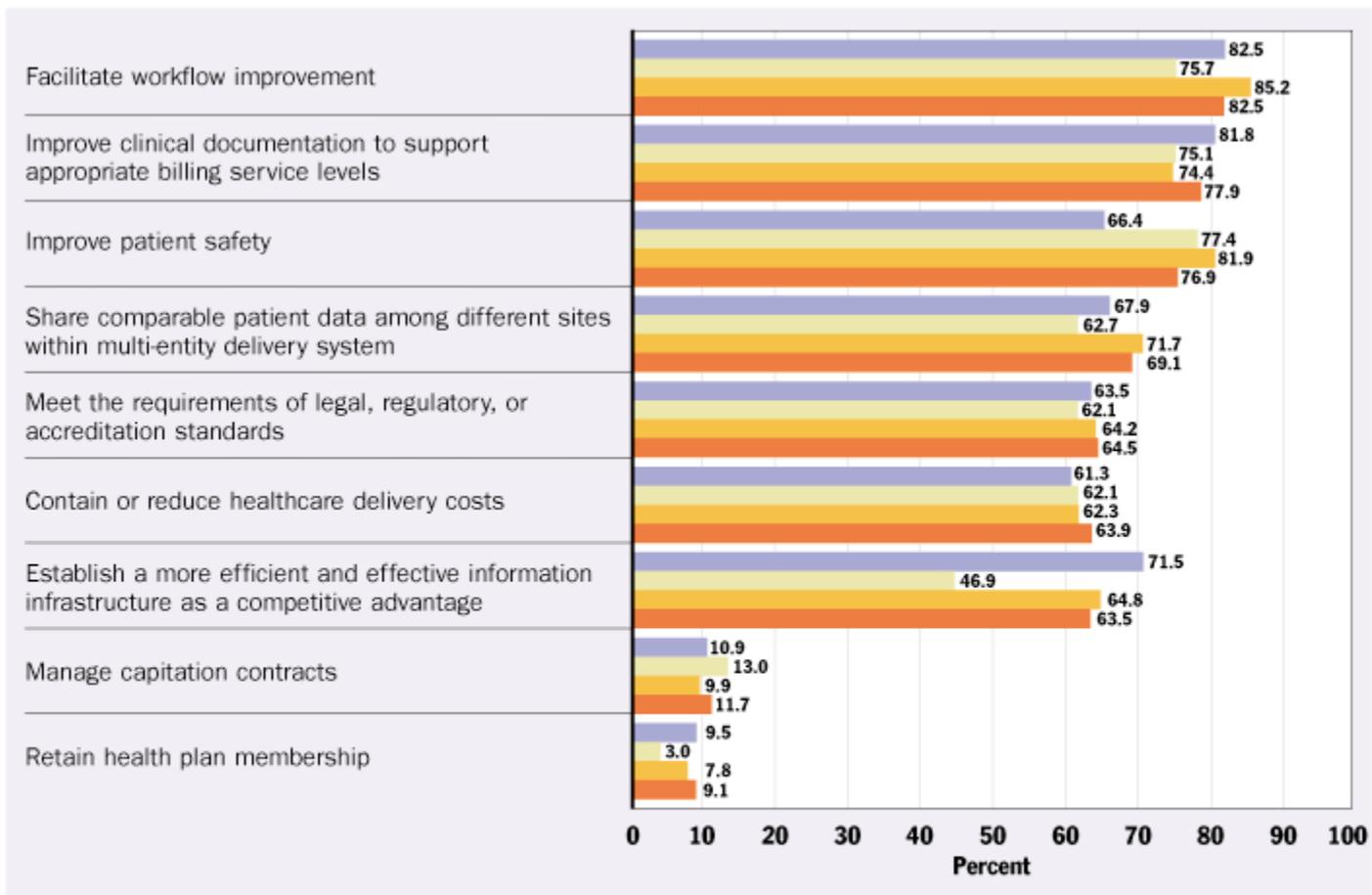
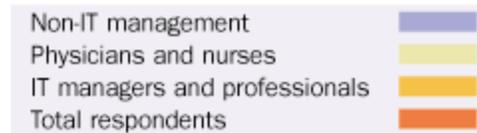


Figure 1. What are the major factors that are driving a need for EHR systems from a management/administrative perspective?

Adapted with permission from the Medical Records Institute.



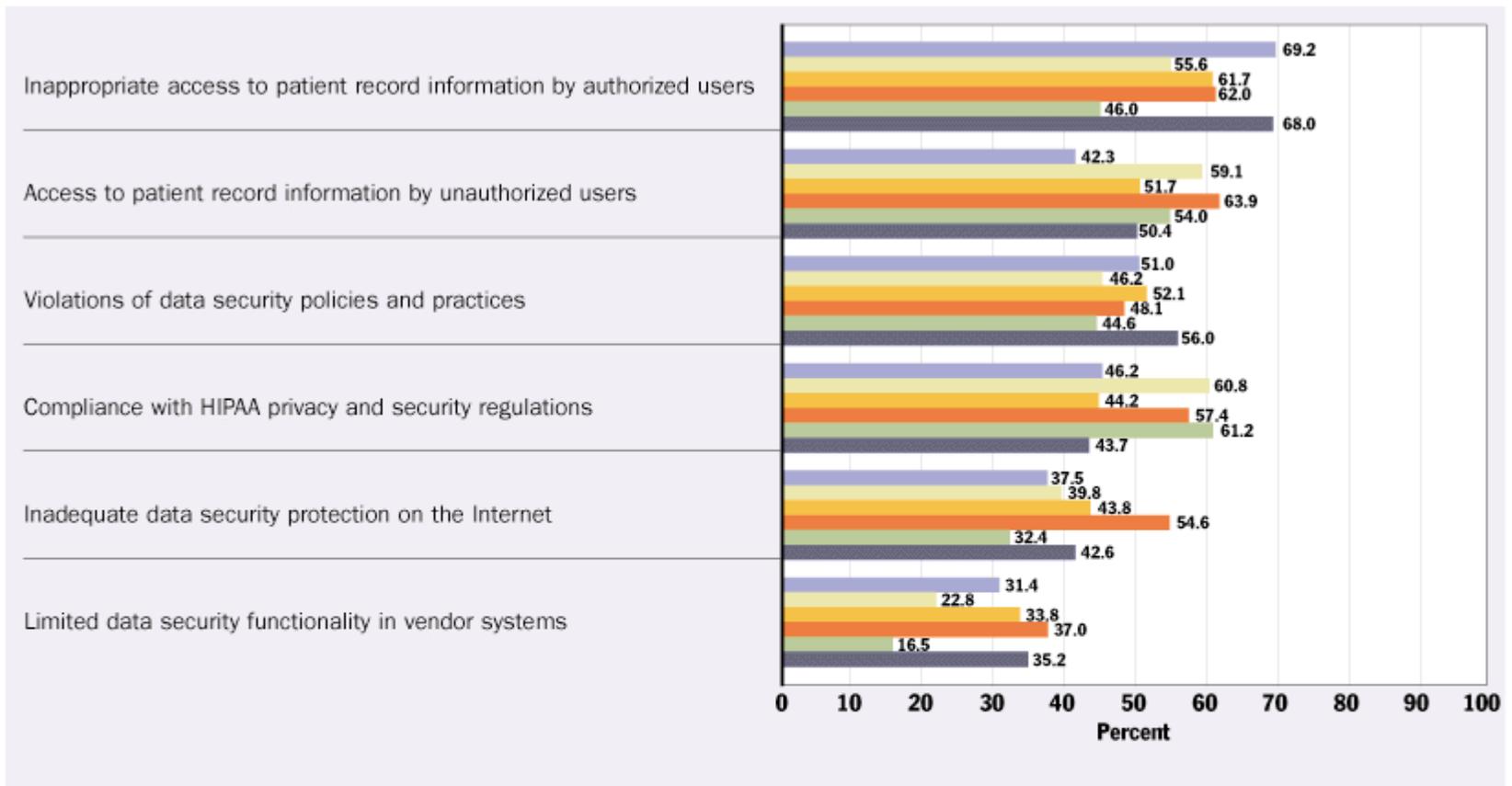


Figure 2. What are your major concerns regarding the privacy and security of patient record information?

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