



## Editorial

# Ethical liabilities in electronic health records (EHR)

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One significant advancement of the present-day healthcare delivery system has been the development of an electronic health record (EHR). EHR is a digital adaptation of medical records, including all the key components of clinical examination, vital parameters, past medical history, diagnosis, treatment plan, and all the inferences obtained from the investigations. This data is saved in computers by hospitals or health professionals for their future use and analysis. Based on published reports, the advantages of EHR over paper records are reasonably appreciable. A few authors believe the EHRs implementation can improve documentation quality, reduce medical errors, and provide all kinds of Tele-Health services, with fewer efforts. Also, clinicians can save time, leading to better clinical output and revenues. The information in digital form is safer than paper records, and the physician can share it with other medical experts and patients anywhere and anytime without delay.<sup>1</sup>

However, while using EHRs and focusing entirely on financial aspects and workflow, there is a possibility that healthcare workers neglect some of the unprecedented medico-legal implications. The patients can feel vulnerable when their health records are intentionally shared or passed on without their consent and information. Patients may hide sensitive information if they do not have faith in the confidentiality of the health record system. At times this disclosure of health information can be due

to technical errors or theft that may also add to a lack of trust in electronic record keeping.<sup>2</sup> Also, there have been incidences of lapses in diagnosis and patient mismanagement involving fatal consequences in hospital set-ups dependent on EHRs. As a part of the medical fraternity, we must enlist the potential risks and the ethical responsibilities involving EHRs implementation and discuss them honestly as more and more professionals are investing and adopting EHR systems. The Technical experts should plan EHR systems that will improve productivity and are safe to implement and follow without any ethical barriers.

**Conflict of Interest** None.

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