

# High quality, safe healthcare = technology + people + systems thinking

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The BMJ Health & Care Informatics presented two editors' choice papers examining two different, but related papers, focused on health professional's perspectives on if and how technology can improve care processes and delivery. The empirical study of Bowden *et al*<sup>1</sup> explored clinicians' perceptions of digital access to patients' past medical history (PMH) as a basis for justifying significant investment into shared electronic health records (SEHR). Bates *et al*<sup>2</sup> work reported a roundtable expert discussion on the challenges and future direction in smart medication management.

Bowden *et al* surveyed clinicians from the front line, those in emergency departments and providing urgent care. In these time critical environments, clinicians reported that access to PMH is imperative to be able provide a response that accounts for health status, current treatment regime and other health data related to the immediate presentation. Clinician's valued and wanted to obtain information from a trusted SEHR; there is a high level of technology acceptance. Five major suggested improvements were identified: increasing the number of patient records available; standardisation of information presentation; increased system reliability; expanded access to information and validation by authoritative/trusted sources. Two policy implications were identified: the need to focus on higher levels of patient participation; and, to ensure patient record curation and stewardship increasing the breadth and depth of information and processes.

Bates *et al* work records an expert discussion on the challenges and future direction in smart medication management. The key focus of the discussion was to reconsider the critical question: how can the original goal of improved healthcare quality and medication safety through electronic medical records be achieved? The challenges identified relate to established

individual behaviours and beliefs, defined care delivery systems, and inflexible service requirements. They suggest that improvements are to be found through addressing simultaneously four interrelated issues: digital and information technology systems; safe prescribing; communication and education of both clinicians and patients; and medication adherence.

Individually, and together, Bowden *et al* and Bates *et al* highlight the need for a whole of systems approach that encompasses all healthcare providers to develop, implement, evaluate and improve technology to enhance care processes and delivery. They bring to attention, once again, that end-user involvement, including the pressing need for increased patient involvement, will likely raise the uptake and success of technology driven improvements.<sup>3 4</sup> Each work promotes renewed recognition that addressing usability and human factors are critical to building safe and effective health systems and care delivery processes.<sup>5-7</sup>

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