From Burnout to Benefit: Reimagining the Role of the Electronic Health Record to Support Clinical Care

Julia Adler-Milstein, PhD

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E-sundhedsobservatoriets årskonference October 11, 2023

#### Overview of Remarks

Part 1:

Understanding the relationship between burnout and EHR work

Part 2:

(Practically) Reimagining the EHR

#### The transition to Electronic Health Records has not been smooth



# Simultaneous evidence of growing clinician burnout and high clerical burden of EHRs

A Systematic Review

Lisa S. Rotenstein, MD, MBA; Matthew Torre, MD; Marco A. Ramos, MD, PhD; Rachael C. Rosales, MD; Constance Guille, MD, MSCR; Srijan Sen, MD, PhD; Douglas A. Mata, MD, MPH

#### PHYSICIAN PRACTICE

By Ming Tai-Seale, Cliff W. Olson, Jinnan Li, Albert S. Chan, Criss Morikawa, Meg Durbin, Wei Wang, and Harold S. Luft

Electronic Health Record Logs Indicate That Physicians Split Time Evenly Between Seeing Patients And Desktop Medicine

The New York Times

The Coronavirus Pandemic > Map and Cases Updated Boosters: What to Know Findings on Covid Recovery Covid F.A.Q.

#### Physician Burnout Has Reached Distressing Levels, New Research Finds

Nearly two-thirds of doctors are experiencing at least one symptom of burnout, a huge increase from before the pandemic. But the situation is not irreparable, researchers say.

# Evidence from US Primary Care Physicians suggests a post-pandemic increase in burnout



**Results forthcoming** 

#### But is EHR work causing burnout?

ANNALS OF MEDICINE NOVEMBER 12, 2018 ISSUE

#### WHY DOCTORS HATE THEIR COMPUTERS

Digitization promises to make medical care easier and more efficient. But are screens coming between doctors and patients?

#### IDEAS AND OPINIONS

**Annals of Internal Medicine** 

#### Physician Burnout in the Electronic Health Record Era: Are We Ignoring the Real Cause?

N. Lance Downing, MD; David W. Bates, MD, MSc; and Christopher A. Longhurst, MD, MS

#### **Research and Applications**

Electronic health records and burnout: Time spent on the electronic health record after hours and message volume associated with exhaustion but not with cynicism among primary care clinicians

Julia Adler-Milstein<sup>1</sup>, Wendi Zhao<sup>1</sup>, Rachel Willard-Grace<sup>2</sup>, Margae Knox<sup>2</sup>, and Kevin Grumbach<sup>2</sup>

## A (brief!) summary of the evidence

Review

# Exploring the relationship between electronic health records and provider burnout: A systematic review

Qi Yan (1)<sup>1,2</sup>, Zheng Jiang<sup>3</sup>, Zachary Harbin<sup>4</sup>, Preston H. Tolbert<sup>4</sup>, and Mark G. Davies<sup>1,2</sup>

Multiple studies have established associations between EHR time and burnout (Adler-Milstein, et al 2020; Gardner, et al 2019; Hilliard, et al 2020; Tai-Seale, et al 2023, Peccoralo, et al. 2021)

• In particular, time on the EHR after hours and the volume of inbox messages have the strongest associations with burnout



### A (brief!) summary of the evidence

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Physicians rank "reduce time on documentation" as the most important intervention for improving wellbeing (Aiken 2023)

Reducing physician documentation burden has become a policy priority (at least in US) and a focus for delivery organizations (Apathy, et al 2022; AMIA 25x5)

### Is this just the crazy US payment system?

#### Suggestive evidence of a (somewhat) uniquely US problem...



Source: Downing, et al 2018

Source: Holmgren, et al 2020

... but the EHR time in non-US health systems is still substantial.

What does the evidence say about actionable factors to improve EHRs and reduce burnout?

Agreeing that **practice unloads clerical burden** was associated with a lower likelihood of burnout and lower burnout scores (Peccoralo et al. 2021)

**Prescription authorization message** volumes were associated with higher odds of burnout (Tai-Seale et al. 2023)

# What does the evidence say about actionable factors to improve EHRs and reduce burnout?

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And what underlies these factors?

#### **TEAMWORK!**

## Digging deeper into teamwork and EHR work



Also interesting: we did not find relationships between EHR proficiency and burnout

**Results forthcoming** 

# Digging even deeper into teamwork and EHR work

High teamwork was most likely to be found in settings with **more stable workforce** (independent practices, rural locations)

Low EHR work was most likely to be found in settings that gave physicians **sufficient time for documentation** and had **higher EHR proficiency** 

#### So where does this leave us?



#### So where does this leave us?



#### So where does this leave us?



#### So where does this leave us? My summary

High team efficiency Reduce clerical burden (predominantly routine messages)



#### So where does this leave us? My summary



#### Overview of Remarks

Part 1:

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Part 2:

(Practically) Reimagining the EHR

### Is the optimal solution hiding in plain sight?







### Improving EHR usability should be a toppriority solution



Two dimensions of usability (from Raj Ratwani):

- <u>User Interface Design</u> (Context Independent) e.g., font size, icons, colors & contrast, layout
- (2) <u>Cognitive Task Support</u> (Context Dependent) e.g., workflow design, visualization, memory aids, error anticipation

#### Three Examples:

1) Improving chart review...

... by co-locating related information

2) Improving order sets...

... by dynamic updating of content

3) Improving diagnostic reasoning...... by offering "best next steps"

## Starting with the simple

Does an EHR user interface design change – one that integrated outside records (comingled local/outside encounters) vs. keeping them separated within the EHR - result in greater use of outside records?

Specifically, with data integration, are outside records reviewed > *More often?* 

- > If so, by whom?
- > If so, in what settings?

# Outside Data Integration in Epic: Before

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# Outside Data Integration in Epic: After

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#### Impact of Inline Encounters on Viewing of Outside Records



Significant increase in level: 29,921 outside record views per week (p<0.001) Adler-Milstein & Wang, JAMIA. 2020

28

#### Impact of Inline Encounters on Viewing of Outside Records: via Chart Review versus Care Everywhere



Almost all of which came via the "new" channel (16,600 per week; p<0.001) No substitution of CR pathway for CE pathway; net gain

# Impact of Inline Encounters on Viewing of Outside Records: <u>By Encounter Type</u>



## WHAT WE LEARNED...

Simple user interface design changes can have a huge impact on provider behavior!

Frontline providers are in the *information business*. Improving their performance will heavily depend on how well we structure their IT environment to facilitate accessing, synthesizing, and documenting information.

#### Three Examples:

1) Improving chart review...

... by co-locating related information

2) Improving order sets...

... by dynamic updating of content

3) Improving diagnostic reasoning...... by offering "best next steps"

Hospital Order Sets





What to consider for <u>removal from existing order sets</u>:

Measure 1: Infrequently ordered items within each order set - # of orders for a given item / the respective number of order set uses

Measure 2: Rapid retraction

- rate of order items discontinued within 30 min

What to consider for <u>addition to existing order sets</u>:

Measure 3: A la carte orders <u>not part</u> of order set co-occurring within 10 min of a given order set use

#### What to investigate:

Measure 4: A la carte orders <u>part</u> of order set co-occurring within 10 min of a given order set use

Li et al. BMJ Quality & Safety. 2019

#### Three Examples:

1) Improving chart review...

... by co-locating related information

2) Improving order sets...

... by dynamic updating of content

3) Improving diagnostic reasoning...
... by offering "best next steps"

#### Figure. The Dynamic Diagnostic Refinement Process



The solid arrows illustrate the diagnostic process, and the dashed arrows illustrate how new information can alter the process. New information may increase uncertainty, causing a return to an earlier point and consideration of a broader set of possible next steps, or it may also enable jumping ahead in the process, avoiding an additional cycle. The diagnostic label is final in that it meets the administrative requirement for entering a code for billing purposes, but ongoing revision of the diagnosis, which drives treatment, is possible.

#### Overview of Remarks

Part 1:

Understanding the relationship between burnout and EHR work

Part 2:

(Practically) Reimagining the EHR – 3 examples

# If you are interested, join our national network...

#### National Research Network for EHR Audit Log Data

150+

MEMBERS FROM OVER 50 ORGANIZATIONS

The National Research Network for EHR Audit Log Data is focused on use of EHR Audit-log and Meta-data to support health services research. Kicking off on March 16, 2018, a group of researchers convened to share their experiences and ideas, learn from each other, and pursue collaborative projects.

The monthly NRN webinars are focused on these three topics:

- Research Topics and Funding (types of research questions well suited to audit log data, funding sources for audit log research)
- Research Methodologies and Skillsets (methodological/modeling approaches well suited to audit log data, skillsets of research team)
- Data Quality and Creating Meaningful Measures (accuracy, usefulness of data documentation, various levels of granularity, strategies for reducing noise/errors)

#### NRN Workgroups

Questions about the NRN for EHR Audit Log Data?

Contact Sarah Rosenthal | sarah.rosenthal@ucsf.edu

#### Local Projects

National Policy

National Research Network

#### https://cliir.ucsf.edu/portfolio/national-research-network-ehr-audit-log-data