

Audit Trails in Patient Portals

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Abstract

Ireland is currently in the process of developing a nationwide patient portal that allows patients to remotely access their medical records. This is necessary since it complies with the latest GDPR requirements.

In the US, a study has been carried out to find out whether allowing patients to decide who accesses their EHR is a good idea. This study took into consideration what patients wanted, created an interface that allowed them to control their data, and showed it to Doctors, Nurses and other staff. The results of this study shed a light to how divided opinions are. The one detail that the study failed to comment on, is whether Healthcare providers agree with patients being notified of the interactions with their data.

Research Question

The hypothesis of this study is that there are good reasons to consider notifying patients about activity related to their data as a way to mitigate discord around the possibility to give patients full control over their data. The goal of this dissertation is to determine a possible common ground where both patients and Healthcare providers feel comfortable

Literature Review

A literature review was carried out to understand Patient Portals and its Ethical considerations, review the studies carried out in the US regarding patient controlled medical records, Audit Trails and its possible utilization in patient portals and the desires of patients with regards all of the above topics.

Methodology

A first qualitative study was carried out in order to determine the desires of patients with regards to the topics of confidentiality, patient portals and the design preferences for an app that allows them to see who has been interacting with their records.

Patient personas were created to inform and inspire the creation of a demonstration app that would be used to show to Healthcare providers.

A second qualitative study was carried out in order to capture the impressions of Healthcare providers. The study consisted in interviews following a demonstration of the app.

Conclusion

The hypothesis of the dissertation was that there are good reasons to further explore the possibility to include Audit Trails in Patient Portals. It was found that this is true, provided that both, patients and providers are included in the process of design.