The Relationship between Health IT Usability and Patient Safety: Towards an EHR Usability Safety Framework

Rationale and Goals

M Chris Gibbons, MD, MPH
Associate Director,
Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Public Health and Health Informatics
Johns Hopkins University
US Healthcare System

“Best in the World”
Current Challenges

• Prevalence of Chronic Disease
  • Long term Clinical Management + Self management

• Burgeoning of the Senior population
  • Ambulatory and community based care models

• Inequality in Quality
  • Population differences and disparities

• Rising Healthcare Costs
Health IT

• Significant promise and potential
• Significant challenges to be overcome
  • Meaningful Use Stages 1 & 2
    • Adoption, Utilization
  • Meaningful Use Stage 3
    • Patient engagement and Population Health
    • “Electronic self manag. tools for high priority pts”

• Success depends on response to challenges
  • Problems could get worse
Health IT Reality Check

• If EHRs are simply electronic versions of paper records, then we will achieve the same results we now see...only faster.

• There is also potential for unintended consequences of Health IT that create new problems or exacerbate existing issues. (Providers and Patients)
Health IT Reality Check

“…suggests that factors other than education, computer literacy, [socioeconomic factors] and computer access are driving the difference.”

“…unanticipated consequence of these tools may be a resulting widening of disparities due to unequal …use.”

Roblin, Houston, Allison et. Al.
Addressing the Challenges

- **CMS**
  - Staged roll out of Meaningful Use

- **ONC**
  - Develop EHR certification standards and specifications

- **AHRQ**
  - Research on EHRs & pt. safety, EHRs & under resourced settings, Consumer Health Informatics

- **NIST**
  - Guidance on relationship between usability and safety
  - Human Factors guidance to reduce disparities
Goals of the Usability-Safety Framework

• Provide practical, evidence based guidance to enable an understanding of the interaction between EHR usability and patient safety

• Provide guidance on those critical elements of usability that have an impact on patient safety
Goals of the Usability-Safety Framework

• Provide a conceptual basis for supporting EHR design, innovation and evaluation in a way that proactively maximizes system benefits to the users and eliminates as many system harms to providers and patients as possible.
The Way Forward

The choice is ours.
The Project Team

• Lana Lowry, PhD  Human Factors Engineering
• Matthew Quinn, PhD  Human Factors Engineering
• Ben-Tzion Karsh, PhD  Human Factors Engineering, (EHRs)
• Emily Patterson, PhD  Human Factors Engineering, (EHRs, Veterans Administration)
• Bob Schumacher, PhD  EHR Usability, Cognitive Psychology
• Patricia Abbott, RN, PhD  Human Factors Engineering, Nursing, Community Health
• M. Chris Gibbons MD, MPH  Population Health, Healthcare Disparities, Consumer Health Informatics, Medicine
The Project Team

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