

Terminology in the HealthCare Records Industry

There are a number of acronyms concerning the HIT, or Healthcare Information Technology industry. Some are confusing and some are redundant. However, there are some subtle differences between the various acronyms, at least according to their most common usages. Following is our interpretation of this rather confusing array of terms.

Note, that after each term, I indicate the number of results that Google offers when searching for this term, as of March 2005. It is my belief that these numbers will migrate over time, indicating the trends both of verbiage, as well as the trends towards utilizing terms which indicate greater levels of interoperability. This position is similar to that taken by Naisbitt in his 1982 book Megatrends; namely that the frequency of printed usage of different terminology indicates important societal trends.

Following is a variety of terms which are frequently utilized to describe, with various intonations, the process of documenting information concerning the medical care of patients.

•Document Management System:

- o – 65,000 Google search results (when adding +medical) in March 2005
- o – 315,000 Google search results (when adding + medical) in March 2007
- o – Increase of 385%
- o A Document Management System implies the ability to manage the individual documents within an individual physician's office. It lacks, in general, the inter connectivity capabilities of both an EMR and an EHR.
 - An example would be a scanning system which can scan in previously produced documentation, whether that documentation be produced by handwriting, dictation, or some other means.
 - A second example would be a template driven document production system.
 - Voice Recognition software, including Dragon NaturallySpeaking®, when used alone, can be part of a document management system, and when utilized with PaperPort for filing can be another example of a document management system.
- EPR – Electronic Patient Record:
 - o – 66,000 Google search results in March 2005
 - o – 296,000 Google search results in March 2007
 - o – Increase of 350%
 - o This is rather similar to Computerized Patient Record. It is an older term, and is remaining popular largely because of the Medical Records Institute, the entity which runs the TEPR convention 'Towards an Electronic Patient Record' TEPR is now in its 21st year.



○ | Chinese Proverb

The Palest Ink is Better than the Best Memory.

○ | Google

The 21st Century's Window onto the Psyche of the world's interests and a Great way to determine the Pervasiveness of a Meme.

○ | Concept

The frequency of search terms appearing in search results is related to the interest level of that term in the general public.

○ | There are many ways of describing the activity of getting physicians' thoughts onto paper, or into another form of information storage.

- CPR – Computerized Patient Record:
 - o - 28,000 Google search results in March 2005
 - o - 67,000 Google search results in March 2007
 - o – Increase of 140%
 - o The CPR is defined as a computer-based record that includes all clinical and administrative information about a patient's care throughout his or her lifetime. The documentation of any practitioner ever involved in a person's healthcare would be included in the CPR, extending from prenatal to postmortem information. This is one of the original phrases for what was until recently called the EMR, but is now generally referred to as the EHR. (adopted from HIPAAAdvisory.com - <http://www.hipaadvisory.com/action/ehhealth/EHR-reality.htm>)
 - o Interestingly, a current search of Google for Computerized Patient Record will result in dozens of articles from the mid to late 1990's.
 - o The VA program, continues to use this terminology, calling their VISTA system a CPRS or Computerized Patient Record System, as early as 1996. See: <http://www1.va.gov/CPRSDEMO/>

- Computerized Medical Record:
 - o – 10,000 Google search results in March 2005
 - o – 43,000 Google search results in March 2007
 - o – Increase of 330%
 - o This term is relatively infrequently used in this century. However, in the 1990's it was more common.
 - o “At this level, physicians and staff collect information on paper and scan it into the computer. As with the automated medical record, it's departmentalized, so patients must provide their names and other information each time they visit a different department. However, the computerized medical record addresses some legal issues -such as preserving data integrity -because information can't be altered on screen.” From the AAFP, 1996; <http://www.aafp.org/fpr/july96/computer/records.html>

- CCR – Continuity of Care Record:
 - o – 5,000 Google search results in March 2005
 - o – 30,000 Google search results in March 2007
 - o – Increase of 500%
 - o This is a standard of 'interoperability' which has recently become popularized. It is a 'snapshot' of a patient's care which can frequently be downloaded into a 'Thumb Drive' or other very small portable memory storage device, and brought by a patient to various health care facilities. It frequently includes:



- | Document Management System
Manages documents, frequently merely by scanning them into a record, without changing them.

- | Electronic Patient Record
This is the latter 75% of TEPR, Towards an Electronic Patient Record

- | CPR
Computerized Patient Records are losing favor as a term, maybe because of CardioPulmonary Resuscitation

- | CMR
Another infrequently utilized term which may connote the scanning in of medical documentation.

- History of Present Illness
 - Current Medical Conditions
 - Past Medical History
 - Allergies
 - Medications
- o The EHR ideally would provide this function, however as true interoperability between EHR platforms is not likely in the foreseeable future, the CCR allows for selected information to be shared between providers. It uses neutral technology, so there is no need to purchase proprietary software to interpret the record. Waegemann, CPRI, 2004
- PHR – Personal Health Record:
 - o – 58,000 Google Search results in March 2005
 - o – 320,000 Google Search results in March 2007
 - o – Increase of 450%
 - o The emphasis in the PHR is on the individual patient.
 - o With a PHR, patients can frequently carry around a thumb drive or card holding digital data to their various physicians, having each physician add to the data. It is similar to the CCR standard, but is more patient centric, as opposed to physician centric. Some of these allow the patients to update their own information.
- EMR – Electronic Medical Record:
 - o – 225,000 Google search results in March 2005
 - o – 787,000 Google search results in March 2007
 - o – Increase of 250%
 - o This implies a level of sophistication above a ‘Document Management’ system. Not only does an EMR allow for you to create documents within your office, it allows you to import information from a variety of external sources, such as:
 - Laboratories
 - Radiology facilities
 - Pharmacies.
 - o While there are precious few black and white distinctions regarding this nomenclature, an EMR will frequently have the ability to ‘upload’ or transmit information to a pharmacy, specifically regarding individual prescriptions for an individual patient.
 - o Definition “Electronic record with full interoperability within an enterprise (hospital, clinic, practice).” Peter Waegemann May 2003 - Healthcare Informatics
- EHR – Electronic Health Record:
 - o -109,000 Google search results in March 2005
 - o -670,000 Google search results in March 2007
 - o – Increase of 515%
 - o This implies a sophisticated level of interoperability within the community. The implication of the ‘Health’ as opposed to the ‘Medical’ in EMR is that it is a longitudinal record of an individual patient’s health record.



○ | CCR - Continuity of Care Record. While there has been a large percentage increase, its usage frequency is still quite low.

○ | PHR
The Personal Health Record is one of the goals of the current administration, and is discussed in political circles quite frequently.

○ | EMR
The Electronic Medical Record is still the most commonly found search phrase on this subject. However, it implies a more limited scope, and is merely a grain within the NHIN

○ | EHR
The Electronic Health Record is, in our opinion, the goal of electronic record keeping, and the direction the industry is rapidly taking.

- The EHR is generally not considered 'owned' by any one physician, but rather is compiled, in many instances, from pieces of information which can be added by any / all of the following:
 - Family Physician – Primary Care Physician
 - Specialist(s)
 - Laboratory
 - Radiology facilities
 - Pharmacies
 - Insurance carriers
- Each of the above entities is capable of both receiving information from and providing information to the longitudinal EHR. Obviously some entities will do more 'uploading' and others will do more 'down loading'. However, the bi-directional free interoperability of the EHR is its major distinguishing feature, differentiating it, in common parlance, from an EMR. It is also broader in context that the EMR, as it is the aggregate of the total experiences related to patient care, not just documentation of medical information.
 - HIMSS provides the following definition: "The Electronic Health Record (EHR) is a secure, real-time, point-of care, patient centric information resource for clinicians. The EHR aids clinicians' decision making by providing access to patient health record information when they need it and incorporating evidence-based decision support. The EHR automates and streamlines the clinician's workflow, ensuring all clinical information is communicated and ameliorates delays in response that result in delays or gaps in care. The EHR also supports the collection of data for uses other than clinical care, such as billing, quality management, outcomes reporting, and public health disease surveillance and reporting." HIMSS 2002

This quote is from the original article in March 2005: "It is my opinion that the relationship between the number of search results for EMR and EHR will reverse itself within the next 12 – 24 months, as more and more emphasis is being placed on the interoperability of the various programs."

Now that it is exactly 24 months later the trend in fact turned out to be true, notwithstanding the fact that it appears as if it will take approximately another 6 months before EHR becomes a more popular term than is EMR. Note that of the above terms, EHR is the one which has had the greatest increase in percentage of search results, and EMR increased the lowest percentage, with the exception of Computerized Patient Record, a term which seems to be out of favor.

I think that a valid conclusion of the above is that the industry is rapidly heading towards a more interoperable health network.

And, we will take this opportunity to state that after 3 years of business as EMRConsultant.com we are now officially changing our name to EHRConsultant.com!



○ | EMR / EHR

The EHR is felt to include the EMR, but extends it outside of the individual facility in which the original record was maintained.

○ | HIMSS has well defined the EHR in 2002, and this is the basis of its current usage.

○ | Trends seen in 2005: 'It is my opinion that the relationship between the number of search results for EMR and EHR will reverse itself within the next 12-24 months'

Eric Fishman, MD. March 2005

○ | EMRConsultant.com, in business since 2004 will change its name to EHRConsultant.com by the May 1st Edition of EHR Scope.