Health IT and Patient Safety: Building Safer Systems for Better Care

Institute of Medicine, Board on Health Care Services, Committee on Patient Safety and Health Information Technology

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IOM's 1999 landmark study *To Err is Human* estimated that between 44,000 and 98,000 lives are lost every year due to medical errors. This call to action has led to a number of efforts to reduce errors and provide safe and effective health care. Information technology (IT) has been identified as a way to enhance the safety and effectiveness of care. In an effort to catalyze its implementation, the U.S. government has invested billions of dollars toward the development and meaningful use of effective health IT.

Designed and properly applied, health IT can be a positive transformative force for delivering safe health care, particularly with computerized prescribing and medication safety. However, if it is designed and applied inappropriately, health IT can add an additional layer of complexity to the already complex delivery of health care. Poorly designed IT can introduce risks that may lead to unsafe conditions, serious injury, or even death. Poor human-computer interactions could result in wrong dosing decisions and wrong diagnoses. Safe implementation of health IT is a complex, dynamic process that requires a shared responsibility between vendors and health care organizations. *Health IT and Patient Safety* makes recommendations for developing a framework for patient safety and health IT. This book focuses on finding ways to mitigate the risks of health IT-assisted care and identifies areas of concern so that the nation is in a better position to realize the potential benefits of health IT.

Health IT and Patient Safety is both comprehensive and specific in terms of recommended options and opportunities for public and private interventions that may improve the safety of care that incorporates the use of health IT. This book will be of interest to the health IT industry, the federal government, healthcare providers and other users of health IT, and patient advocacy groups.

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