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Data vs. Information

Healthcare providers use databases to store a patients data, that once processed is turned into valuable information. Without data, information can not be created. Data is a collection of random and raw facts that are gathered from the source. Once the data is organized and processed it transforms from meaningless text and numbers into specific information that may be used to conduct an analysis. The OLTP, online transaction processing, is the most common database used by healthcare professionals in conjunction with a large variety of applications. Some common applications include the EHR (electronic health record), costing system, and the practice management system.

The OLTP has greatly improved the way in which data is stored and interpreted with increased automation. All of the patients data, such as their name, age, medical history, insurance, vitals, lab work, ect., can be stored and processed into information once entered and organized in the database. For example, the number 175 is data that was taken from the patient. Data could potentially be dangerous if someone makes an assumption of what it is that may be incorrect. The number 175 doesn't give us any information until it is labeled as the patients weight, and given a unit, in this case pounds. More information can be gathered by checking the patients previous weight history and analyzing whether their weight has increased, decreased, or stayed the same. If one takes a step back and looks at the bigger picture of all the patients weight, we have the ability to determine if the average weight of a human has changed over the years.

The data of an individuals weight has now been organized and processed into valuable information.