Literature Review

There is concurrence in the health and healthcare industry on the importance and benefits of an effective electronic health record (EHR) system over paper records. EHRs have the potential to reduce cost, improve efficiency and quality of patient care and safety. Furthermore, EHRs ensure access to medical records from remote locations, improve ease of retrieval of records, allow simultaneous access to patient records by multiple users and reduce prescription errors by eliminating handwritten prescriptions. (Akanbi et al, 2012)

However, difficulties with implementation have limited the actualization of these benefits. (Ross et al, 2016) In a study by Akanbi et al, poor data quality, data duplication, inconsistencies in reporting and ill-timed submissions are some of the challenges to the development of an effective health information system in Sub-Saharan Africa. These challenges were largely attributed to the dependence on manual method of inputting of data. (Alobo et al, 2020)

Ross et al in a systemic review of e-health literature in North America and Europe identified barriers to implementation of EHR as complexity, adaptability, cost, compatibility with existing systems and work practices. Another key factor was sufficient financial and legislative support. Other considerations include, knowledge, computer skills, abilities and experience, strategic planning, training, monitoring, and ongoing evaluation of barriers. Ajami et al in another systematic review found that attitudinal constraints such as the behaviour of health workers being resistant to change was also an important factor amongst others. Nevertheless, a study by Alobo et al of health workers perception and satisfaction with EHR system in a specialist hospital found that health workers were satisfied with EHRs as it made their work less cumbersome.

The current literature on the implementation of effective EHR systems however focus on implementation and interoperability across a healthcare organization or on national levels. However, a side effect of globalization is increased international migration. Some innovation must therefore be required to keep up with the corresponding increase in health records to provide quality real time health care to migrant patients.

The aim of this project is therefore to refocus the discussion on building and implementing electronic health systems to be transferable, accessible, and useful across national borders.

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