FRIDAY READING REFLECTION-16

A.

Electronic health often referred to as e-health has been in picture from the recent years. It has transformed the approach to the delivery of care and often includes tele health and telemedicine as primary components. Health information technology has opened gates to telemedicine to propagate on a large scale. Telemedicine collectively involves the usage of HIT in the form of audio/visual communication to deliver the services to patients and encourage communication among multiple clinicians (Chiang et al., 2021, p. 668). Telehealth includes broad spectrum of services like teleradiology, teleophthalmology and remote intensive care monitoring. These services are especially valuable in situations like pandemics. Covid-19 is a good example where the distance between the consumer and provider is reduced and can be done at the comfort of home (Mann et al, 2020). Electronic messaging has proven to be an excellent resort for communication and to reduce the appointment time and save time for both clinician and patient (Chiang et al., 2021, p. 672). Follow up visits were made much simpler with tele monitoring as the reports and interpretations can be made by the physician on a phone call or via an online platform. Video based tele health services made several health services like primary consultation, health monitoring and medication prescription available to the people living in remote conditions and also to the underserved population. Economically, most of these services are designed to be affordable by the patient. With the above-mentioned advantages, there are equal number of challenges tangled with the implementation of telehealth and telemedicine. Privacy is the most pressing legal issue associated with the delivery of tele health services. Data breaches are encountered in many situations and data security is threatened when health data is exchanged via online services which might not align with HIPAA Act. According to Iribarren et al. (2017) the economic impact of e-health varied in accordance with the disease condition and pattern of distribution. So, this limits the value of telehealth in treating chronic conditions requiring complex protocols. Not everyone remains in par with the technical advances, so the uneducated and underprivileged population are constrained from using the tele health services which raises the issue of social inequality. Accuracy and correctness of the treatment to a condition is not guaranteed as physical examination of the patient is not performed by the clinician during the online consultation.

B.

Health IT has shown to have both positive and negative impacts on health and quality of care delivered to the patients. Integration of various hospital systems across the globe is made possible with health IT. Many advantages have been noted with this connection. Improvements in patient safety and quality of care is resultant of clinical decision support and evidence-based practice. Streamlining of clinical workflows is resultant of HIT with development and advancements of patient portals. Electronic prescribing always led to ease of medication available to patients and even expanded the scope for health education through patient portals. Technical advancements have led to innovations in health monitoring devices like wearable devices- trackers, smartwatches and smart clothing used to track health outcomes of patients (Choe et al., 2021, p. 643). The information contained in these computers are coded into standard documents using terminologies like ICD, SNOMED and LOINC which are in accordance with Health Level 7 to promote interoperability among institutions. HIT has equipped the clinicians with readily available patient data to be accessed from anywhere and reuse it to formulate and update diagnosis. All this patient data documented properly has opened platform for telehealth services to promote patient integrity at all times. The time and manpower needed to record and preserve the data is now digitalized minimizing the costs and improving the economy is the greatest achievement of HIT.

C.

Although health IT has proven to revolutionize the health care sector, there are challenges that needed to be addressed to further improve the health outcomes. According to Fölster (2017) educating the healthcare professionals prior to the promotion of mobile health application can uplift the spread of these innovations in public. Other proposed strategies for using e-health applications include reducing the costs of usage to users and improving the handling requests of the application (Fölster, 2017). Health IT requires a lot of effort to support the concept of meaningful use (MU). The EHRs designed should be in accordance with the needs of the administrative staff and the clinicians as the user interface has major effect on physician burnout (McGowan et al., 2012). Emphasis on adequate training of the healthcare personnel should be given on use of new technology as unforeseen challenges may arise if left unaddressed. Care should be taken to maintain and update security regulations to ensure patient safety and privacy. Regulatory checks must be performed on the procedures delivered to patients by employing eCQMs- electronic clinical quality measures (eCQI Resource Center, 2021a). To encourage multiple providers to adopt and switch to HIT, financial support in the form of incentives must be given for HITECH implementation (McGowan et al., 2012). The quality of care delivered can be improved by ensuring proper documentation by employing checks with HQMF- health quality measurement format (eCQI Resource Center, 2021b). This ensures that the information is in accurate format to facilitate interoperability. Involving the patients in health IT and educating them about the need to switch to innovations in health can result in consumer driven demand for HIT.

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