Reviewer's report

Title: Is Canada ready for patient accessible electronic health records? A national scan.

Version: 1 Date: 22 April 2008

Reviewer: Hans-Ulrich Prokosch

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
The authors have pursued a survey among Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Canadian public and acute care hospitals in order to assess the readiness for the implementation and adoption of EHRs and PHR in Canada. Considering the current marketing strategies of Microsoft (Health Vault), Google (Health) and Dossia in the U.S. trying to build up personal health records for citizens end employees and linking those to hospital information systems such a survey among national hospitals is an important activity. The research question has been well defined by the authors.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The methods applied for the survey are appropriate and well described. However I would find it helpful for a reader, if the complete questionnaire used for the survey could be made available as an appendix to the paper.

Further the authors state, that the CEOs (to whom the survey letter was send) were asked to complete the questionnaire themselves, but in addition, they were also asked to forward the link for the questionnaire to the chiefs of medicine, nursing and informatics, or the individual who was regarded as the most appropriate to respond. This however could lead to an even lower number of replies from different hospitals if multiple replies came from different persons of one hospital. The authors should try to clarify this fact.

3. Are the data sound?
Yes – the results of the survey are based on sound data

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Yes

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Limitations of the survey are given by the low response rate of 39%. This is clearly stated by the authors. This also leads to the restriction, that a) the results from this cross sectional survey may not be representative of all Canadian acute
care and general hospitals (which is stated by the authors) and also lead to the authors decision to limit their analysis to a descriptive analysis.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes

Final decision:
Accept after minor essential revisions:

My only minor essential wish for revisions is concerned with
a) adding the complete questionnaire as an appendix and
b) explaining in more detail, if the responses (39%) all came from different hospitals or if the real response rate may be even smaller, when responses from one hospital (which might be possible, since CEOs were asked to also distribute the questionnaire link to other people in their hospital) were count multiple times.

As a level of interest I think, that this is an article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests. It would be of more importance to the field, if the response rate would have been higher.

It is not essential that this manuscript be seen by an expert statistician since descriptive analysis have been performed only.

Quality of written English is good.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I do not have any competing interests in relation to the paper.