Reviewer's report

Title: Integrated Personal Health Records: Transformative Tools for Consumer-Centric Care

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Reviewer: Ronald Lagoe

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This manuscript concerns a very important subject with respect to health care information, the use of electronic data to communicate and manage personal health records. Considerable literature has addressed the potential of electronic data for improvement of health care efficiency and outcomes. Much of this literature is very positive concerning the potential of electronic data, including personal health records. Unfortunately, published literature contains relatively few rigorous quantitative studies that document the specific impact of electronic data on health care, including personal health. This situation creates an opportunity for the authors to address this important need.

The authors have done a good job of outlining the potential of personal health records with respect to electronic data. Their manuscript is well organized and addresses, in a summary manner, the major issues involved with this subject. They have defined personal health records and identified the important models available in this area. They have also outlined the potential of PHRs to improve efficiency and outcomes of care. They have also suggested a worthwhile agenda for moving toward these objectives.

To be sure, the authors could not be expected to develop new research concerning the quantitative impact of personal health records in this type of manuscript. They do have the opportunity, however, to define with specificity the need for this type of research that currently exists.

This reviewer suggests that the value of the manuscript can be improved by addressing a number of important points with greater specificity. This approach will require revisions and additions that add realism and detail to the existing manuscript.

Minor Essential Revisions

The section concerning Transformative Potential of Integrated PHRs on Pages 5 - 7 needs a more realistic tone and more examples concerning specific research from the literature. The authors' enthusiasm for PHRs and electronic data needs to be balanced by a realistic view of the shortcomings of the current state of the art. They can retain their material concerning the positive potential of electronic data while adding additional studies that raise challenging questions about how this potential will be obtained.
This section could also benefit from greater emphasis on the gaps within existing research concerning electronic data. Additional specific commentary on the lack of documented results in each of the four areas of potential can define this subject for the reader and also help set an agenda for addressing these needs in subsequent research.

Another area with considerable potential for additional specificity includes the Need for Additional Research and Analysis on Page 16 and the key questions on Page 17. The authors have done an adequate job of identifying general issues with respect to the future development of research concerning PHRs. There is an opportunity here for a greater level of detail in the beginning of a specific research agenda. This additional material need not be overly lengthy. It could take the form of a number of additional subcategories for each of the bullets provided by the authors.

Discretionary Revisions

This paper is generally well written, but it could benefit from an additional review of grammatical issues. It contains a number of split infinitives such as "to actively manage" on the first page of the Introduction and "to jointly manage" in the Third Section under Transformative Potential. Another related issue is the use of "towards" in the subtitle concerning Recent Progress on Page 12. The proper term is toward.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests'.