

Electronic Health Record: An Opportunity to Strengthen the Services of School Health Care Workers in Iran

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Dear Editor

In today's world, the importance of students' health has been noticed more than in the past, and in the meantime, the role of school healthcare workers is vital in providing for and maintaining students' health. Considering that school-age children spend about 1080 hours in school every year, and many of them struggle with chronic diseases, school healthcare workers must be regarded as part of the healthcare team. However, care coordination between health service providers and school health workers must be improved due to reliance on inefficient and traditional systems. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the technological infrastructure so that healthcare workers can perform their duties best (1).

School healthcare workers are responsible for recording and maintaining students' health information and documenting the care provided to them (2). This information must be timely, accurate, legible, complete, retrievable, and secure. However, in Iran, these processes still need to be done manually and traditionally, which is time-consuming and inefficient and increases the possibility of human errors (3). One of the practical solutions to improve the quality of school healthcare services is the use of electronic health records (EHR), which can significantly improve the accuracy and efficiency of recording and managing students' health information (4).

As an essential tool in the 21st century, EHR can empower school healthcare providers to provide student-centered healthcare. With the use of EHR, the efficiency and quality of health services will

be improved and will positively impact students' health, safety, and academic outcomes (5). Given that school health workers are often the only health care providers in schools, quick and accurate access to medical information is critical to providing effective and efficient services. EHR can provide caregivers with up-to-date, real-time information and prevent serious health problems such as emergency visits and unnecessary hospitalizations. This improves the quality of care and empowers healthcare providers to grow professionally in their roles (6).

Additionally, EHRs help school healthcare providers manage data and perform processes such as documenting, reporting, and analyzing student health data. This system can collect data in real-time and allows caregivers to quickly identify health trends, such as outbreaks of infectious diseases, and take necessary measures (7). Health data collected through EHR can help health departments closely monitor the health status of the community and take appropriate preventive measures (8).

Despite the significant benefits of EHR, implementing this system in Iranian schools faces challenges, such as the lack of appropriate IT infrastructure and the need for more familiarity among some healthcare workers and teachers with these new technologies. To overcome these challenges, it is necessary to hold comprehensive training programs for school healthcare workers so that they are familiar with the skills required to use EHR. Also, creating appropriate technical and security support to protect students' health information and allocating appropriate funds for the preparation and maintenance of these systems is very important.

For the success of EHR implementation in Iranian schools, the following suggestions are provided:

1. Education and awareness: hold training courses for healthcare workers and school staff on the importance of using EHRs.
2. Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure Development: upgrade IT systems in schools to support EHR.
3. Technical support: creating technical support teams to solve possible problems and ensure the optimal functioning of systems.
4. Information insecurity: ensuring the security of students' health data using appropriate security protocols.
5. Funding: state and local funds will be allocated to purchase and maintain EHR systems and provide necessary equipment.

The electronic health record system has yet to be used in Iran's schools, and this issue is a significant gap in the country's school health system. The implementation of EHR in Iranian schools can significantly improve the quality of school healthcare services and, finally, students' health. This system helps school healthcare providers access accurate and up-to-date information on students and can effectively improve care coordination and prevent serious health problems. Now is the time to step seriously towards implementing EHR in Iranian schools and using this new technology to improve the health and well-being of the country's students.

Authors' Contribution

All authors have contributed equally to the conceptualization of the work, writing and reviewing the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of

any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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