Employer Sponsored Personal Health Record (PHR) Systems

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Abstract

Employers are providing systems to employees that enable them to keep track of their personal health care information. Personal health record (PHR) systems can help employees manage their health information and assist in making dependable health care decisions. This study focuses on identifying employee concerns and their expectations from an employer sponsored PHR system. The data collected from the survey will help to understand the utilization and adoption of PHR systems sponsored by the employer.

Introduction

At a large company in the U.S., more than 80,000 employees and their families have been provided a way to keep track of their personal health care information. This employer sponsored personal health record (PHR) system was implemented for use in 2003 as one of many programs that encourage and empower employees to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles.

The PHR system was developed by a third party provider that is well known for their ability to handle personal information with maximum confidentiality and security. The employer has access to aggregate data about the employees as a group, not as individuals. The employer cannot access personally identifiable information through the PHR system.

This study will investigate the employer sponsored PHR systems for employees. Under investigation are the identification of employee expectations and concerns. The effects of user concerns on their utilization and adoption of an employer sponsored PHR system will also be studied.

Methodology

To gain an understanding of employee expectations and concerns, a preliminary study was conducted in 2004 by the PHR system provider. The employees that are registered users of the PHR system were asked to complete an online questionnaire 12 months after their registration to the system. The vendor emailed invitations to registered users of the PHR system asking them to participate in an online survey.

This data collection was done to gauge usage, satisfaction, impact and perceived value of the PHR system among current users.

A new study is now being conducted by the author to follow-up on similar issues after the system has been in use for more than 3 years. Another company wide survey will be conducted where all employees will be asked to participate over the summer. The results of this new survey will be presented in the poster session.

Results

The results of the preliminary study as they were reported by the vendor are presented next. 15,432 emails were sent out and a total of 1,508 respondents started the survey. 1,266 respondents completed the survey, yielding a completion rate of 83.9% and a response rate of 9.8%. The margin of error is +/- 2.64% at the 95% confidence level.

In the preliminary study, the profile of the respondents resulted in an average age of 48 years old, more than half were male, 89% considered themselves healthy, 54% deal with a chronic condition in the household, 70% were college graduates, 72% were married, and 80% had no children in the household.

The preliminary study results also showed that only 37% of employees were satisfied with the employer sponsored PHR and that 20% of employees used the PHR system monthly or more often.

Conclusion

The results from the survey will provide analysis of the data to determine usability and satisfaction of employees using an employer sponsored PHR system.

References