

Harnessing Information Technologies to Improve the Delivery of Diabetes Care to Veterans: The Future Is Today

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Abstract

Background:

Although momentum is now building nationally for improved informatics, progress has been incremental in most cases. One notable exception is the Veterans Health Administration, which utilizes one of the most widely used electronic medical record systems in the world.

Objectives:

The articles in this symposium demonstrate the implementation of technology to move beyond the electronic medical record at the time of the medical encounter to improve timeliness and outcomes of care delivery for veterans with diabetes.

Results:

We report on the use of electronic registries and nurse practitioner-based programs across multiple sites to improve glycemic control; the implementation of a digital retinal imaging system in primary care clinics; the use of health information technology to improve patient self-care; and the development of a research database to move beyond performance measurement to evaluate longitudinal outcomes.

Conclusions:

While these articles demonstrate the ability of a single national system of care to harness the power of technology to novel strategies for the delivery of care and its evaluation, the technology is scalable from small group practices to regional health care systems.

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Abbreviations: (EHRs) electronic health records, (IVR) interactive voice response, (VHA) Veterans Health Administration, (VistA) Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture

Keywords: diabetes, electronic health record, veterans

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