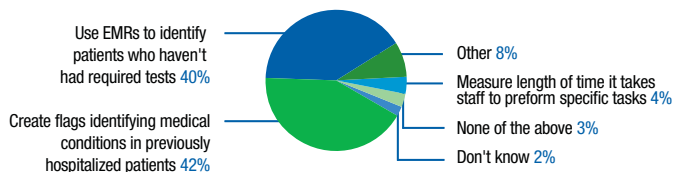


Summary

Over the past several weeks, several reports have addressed different ways that information technology (IT) can impact healthcare. A recent report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) examined ways in which various initiatives, including IT, can reduce infections. Respondents were equally likely to indicate that two areas identified in this report—creating flags to identify specific medical conditions in previously hospitalized patients and using EMRs to identify patients who haven't had required tests—will have a positive impact on patient care. However, respondents were less likely to believe that recent initiatives by states to require hospital-acquired reporting will have substantial impact on healthcare delivery.

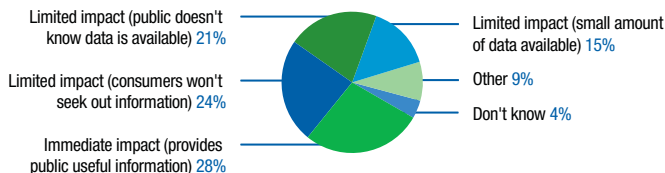
Impact of IT on Patient Care

In early September, the GAO published a report examining efforts of states and hospitals to reduce infections through various initiatives, including the use of information technology (IT). Respondents were equally likely to indicate that creating flags to identify specific medical conditions in previously hospitalized patients and using EMRs to identify patients who haven't had required tests will be two areas which will have a positive impact on patient care.



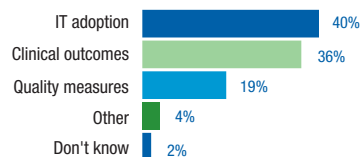
Impact of State-Driven Hospital Acquired Infection Reporting

Several states are beginning to require hospital-acquired infection reporting. Most of the respondents believe that this type of reporting will have limited value either because consumers won't seek out this type of information, the public doesn't know the data is available or because the data is available only in small numbers. Only one-quarter of respondents indicated that this type of information would provide the public with useful information to guide healthcare choices.



Medical Education Training: Focus of the Future

Representatives from the academic medical community recently told the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission that medical education training needs to move into the 21st century by focusing on IT adoption, as well as clinical outcomes and quality measures. Forty percent of respondents indicated that advances in education surrounding IT adoption would have the most impact on healthcare delivery in the future. Another third indicated that advances in education surrounding clinical outcomes would have an impact.



Impact of Ability to Purchase Data Mining Software

A handful of hospitals will receive a grant to buy data mining software as part of an effort by the Blue Shield of California Foundation to cut hospital-acquired infection rates. One-third of respondents noted that these grants would most benefit healthcare delivery by reducing the number of patients that contracted hospital-acquired infections. Another 20 percent indicated that these grants would create an overall reduction in costs to both patients and hospitals.

