9 top hospital IT threats in 2019

ECRI Institute has recently released its annual list of top healthcare technology threats that hospitals could face in 2019. Is dealing with these risks high on your list of priorities?

Hackers can take advantage of remote access to systems leading to disruption of healthcare operations.

Publicly accessible systems are easier for criminals to exploit to expose patient data and disrupt operations.

Action: Identify and keep strict surveillance over remote points of access points, and have a strict cyber security policy in place.

Sponges left inside a patient continue to be a surgical complication, in spite of manual counts.

It's common practice to manually count surgical sponges following an operation but, still, there are errors with retained sponges.

Action: Consider technologies that supplement manual counting.

You might also like: **[Facing up to enterprise risk management](#)**

Ventilator alarms that are improperly set put patients at risk for hypoxic brain injury or death.

It is a simple step to set an alarm to alert staff when a patient ventilator disconnects or leaks but many hospitals don't have working alarms.

Action: Establish a routine ventilator inspection procedure and policies on when to set alarms.

Mishandling flexible endoscopes after disinfection increases risk of patient infections.

Even thoroughly disinfected, flexible scopes can spread infections if they're not dried properly with this risk rising when they are handled with unclean gloves.

Action: Establish strict routine for cleaning, drying and handling scopes.

Confusing dose rate with flow rate can lead to infusion pump medication errors.

Confusing these two critical rates can lead to high-risk medical administration errors.

Action: Auto-programme infusion pumps, and implement regular employee training on where to enter dose rates and flow rates to avoid serious errors.

Improper customisation of physiologic monitor alarm settings can lead to missed alarms.

Too many alarms can lead to alarm fatigue while too few can put patients'' lives at risk.

Action: Train staff in how to set these alarms, and touch base with vendors about tools they offer that can mitigate the impact of multiple alarms.

Injury risk from overhead patient lift systems.

Poorly-installed patient lifts can cause more problems than they aim to solve.

Action: Undertake systems test after installation and perform regular maintenance to ensure lifts are in working condition.

Cleaning fluid seeps into electrical components can increase risk of equipment damage and fires.

Cleaning and disinfection of equipment is essential but quantity and application of fluid can cause damage.

Action: Stick to manufacturer instructions, and squeeze out excess liquid from sponges or cloths before using them.

Flawed battery charging systems and practices can affect device operation.

An improperly-charged device can lead to serious problems.

Action: Ensure that equipment has functioning battery gauges so it is clear when charging is necessary.

Source: ECRI

Image credit:

Published on : Sat, 15 Dec 2018