
Cyber hackers could kill patients with wearable health monitors



Hackers could kill patients by attacking their wearable health monitors, the UK's [Royal Academy of Engineers](#) has warned.

In a new report, security experts warn that health technology, such as pacemakers and heart pumps, are vulnerable to cyber attacks that can have "severe consequences" on patient safety.

The academy warns that the number of healthcare devices susceptible to hacking is growing, posing a threat not only to individuals but also entire networks.

Wearable health monitors that are linked to the internet or internal computer networks could also provide a gateway for hackers to plant ransomware into systems, which threatens victims if ransoms aren't paid.

The report calls for new regulation to make sure that devices connected to the internet are not vulnerable to hacking. It points out that many devices were designed before the threat was realised.

In recent years there have been a number of recalls of medical devices because they were found to be vulnerable to cyber attack.

Some US hospitals have been infected by the Wannacry and Medjack computer viruses after hackers targeted medical devices that were not protected.

The threat spreads from health technology to driverless cars says Professor Nick Jennings, a fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineers and Vice Provost at [Imperial College London](#): "There is genuine harm that can be done through poor cyber security on medical devices, on future-connected homes, on autonomous vehicles, and if they are not dealt with then that will lead to harms and deaths. There are vulnerabilities in a range of connected medical devices. Dick Cheney famously changed the settings on his pacemaker because he wanted to make sure he wasn't vulnerable to an attack. Medical devices can also be used as a gateway into other parts of the network, so if a device is not well protected then it's easy to go through one device to another devices. We cannot totally avoid failures or attacks, but we can design systems that are highly resilient and will recover quickly."

Source: [Royal Academy of Engineering](#)

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