HIT Disconnect Heading for Failure

A trio of health and technology experts have said that the gulf between developers of health IT tools and the staff who use them is an obstruction to innovation in the sector.

App, wearable and IT system creators fail to interact effectively or at all with patients and healthcare personnel. This results in a limited understanding of what end-users' needs are and the best delivery of the health IT tools say Robert S. Rudin, Ph.D., David W. Bates, M.D., and Calum MacRae, Ph.D., in The New EnglandJournal of Medicine.

The schism between developers and end-users also extends beyond initial implementation to communication about how to expand upon software that is already installed. Specifically, doctors cannot always communicate clearly to engineers and developers about the changes to installations that would work best.

The most common outcomes of this gulf are that tools are overly-customised so that only a limited number of staff can use them or development of one-size-fits-all tools and systems that are too general to fit needs of all users.

See Also: 4 in 5 U.S. Hospitals Adopt Basic EHR, But Face Limitations

The study authors claim that there are means to mitigate this situation and facilitate HIT reaching its potential of improving workflow and patient care. They are as follows:

- Creation of teams that field perspectives from both developers and IT companies in addition to doctors and patients. These teams could participate in programmes aimed at innovation in the bid for improved collaboration.
- Direct contact with end-users of tools through interviews and observation of clinicians and patients.
- Adaptation of care processes in order to align better with new technologies.

The authors say that research from other industries shows that most IT benefits do not result from 'paving the cow path,' but instead, major transformations occur after intensive process re-engineering to leverage the technology's potential.

Source: FierceHealthcare
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