



Electronic health records assist clinicians in smoking treatment

Clinical question

How effective are electronic health record (EHR)-facilitated interventions at increasing smoking cessation support actions by clinicians, and when it comes to patient cessation outcomes?

Bottom line

At least in the short term, documentation of tobacco status and referral to cessation counselling appeared to increase following the introduction of an expectation to use the EHR to record and treat patient tobacco use at medical visits. However, patient smoking cessation was not demonstrated.

Caveat

As few randomised studies existed, it was not possible to conduct a meta-analysis. Eight of the 11 studies were non-randomised observational studies, and 5 of these lacked a control group. Small sample sizes and convenience sampling of included clinics increased the potential risk of selection bias. None of the studies included a direct assessment of patient quit rates.

Context

Health information systems, such as EHRs, computerised decision-support systems and electronic prescribing, are potentially valuable components for improving the quality and efficiency of clinical interventions for tobacco use.

Cochrane Systematic Review

Boyle R et al. Use of electronic health records to support smoking cessation. *Cochrane Reviews*, 2011, Issue 12. Article No. CD008743. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD008743.pub2.

This review contains 11 studies involving over 283,000 participants.

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