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Critical success factors for electronic
medical records access by primary
health care professionals

A thesis presented in partial
fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master Of Philosophy
in Information Systems at
Massey University

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1997

Abstract

Electronic medical records (EMRs) are increasingly used in health care. Their successful use will result in improving the efficient integration of primary and secondary care, one of the main strategies of the current health reforms in New Zealand. Some secondary health care institutions in New Zealand are considering implementing an EMR that will be located within the secondary health care institution but that could be accessed by primary health care professionals.

The purpose of this research project was to identify the critical success factors for access by primary health care professionals, who may not be employees of the secondary health care institution, to such an EMR.

The research project utilised a variety of data collection methodologies. A literature review identified published primary and secondary health care requirements. A postal survey of GPs, midwives and specialist obstetricians working in primary care within a Crown Health Enterprise (CHE) catchment area was conducted. The literature review enabled the development of a critical success model based on the Technology Acceptance Model which was supported by the results of the primary care survey.

The findings of this research project indicate that critical success factors for EMR access include user acceptance of the EMR, perceived usefulness of an EMR that is easy to use, ensuring privacy, security and confidentiality of data, obtaining patient consent, and the use of data and communication standards. The concerns of all the users of an EMR have a significant impact on the success of an EMR system implementation in a secondary care health care institution that can be accessed by primary care health professionals. If these concerns are not met, use of the system will be limited, the benefits of such a system will not materialise and the implementation project will not be successful.

This research project recommends that further research is undertaken to explore the concerns of patients regarding the access to and use of EMRs.

Preface and acknowledgements

I would also like to thank the staff of the Department of Information Systems at Massey University, and especially my supervisors, Dr Richard Whiddett and Jose Pastor-Urban, for their encouragement, proof reading, comments and generally keeping me on track.

I would like to thank the various primary and secondary health care organisations/institutions for their assistance and support in this research project. I would like to thank the general practitioners, obstetricians and midwives of the Wellington, Porirua, Kapiti and Palmerston North areas for their co-operation and contributions to this report.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners in giving their permission to use the data from their GP databases.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my family, friends and work colleagues for their support in enabling me to undertake this research.

The research project was funded by the Foundation for Science, Research and Technology.

Table of contents

ABSTRACT **II**

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS **III**

TABLE OF CONTENTS **IV**

LIST OF FIGURES AND/OR TABLES **X**

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION **11**

CHAPTER 2 - THE RESEARCH PROCESS **14**

2.1 OBJECTIVES **14**

2.2 THE THESIS STRUCTURE **15**

2.3 LIMITATIONS **16**

CHAPTER 3 - LITERATURE REVIEW **18**

3.1 METHODOLOGY **18**

3.2 ORDER OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW **19**

3.2.1 The use of information technology and EMRs in health care: **19**

Role of IT and EMRs in health care 19

Definition of an EMR 21

Advantages and Disadvantages of EMRs in health care 22

3.2.2. Critical Success Factors for general End-User Computing **30**

General end-user computing 30

Critical success factors (CSFs) 32

Definition of end-user computing success 33

3.2.3 Variables Influencing general EUC success	37
Intra-organisational variables influencing EUC success	38
Individual variables influencing EUC success	39
End-users attitude towards the computer or application	40
User acceptance and user participation in EUC success:	42
Utility of the computer or the specific application	44
Technical aspects of the computer or specific application that influence an individual's use of the computer or application.	45
Extra-organisational variables influencing EUC success	46
3.2.4 GP computing and GP reaction to computerisation and EMRs	47
Practice computerisation	48
Reluctance to change	50
Advantages of GP computerisation	53
Practice Management	53
Patient Management	53
Disadvantages of GP computerisation	54
Cost	54
Security and confidentiality	55
Medico-legal concerns	56
Lack of demonstrable benefits in patient outcome	56
Attitude towards computerisation and the use of EMRs	56
Technology problems	57
Concerns regarding the uses of data in an EMR	60
Overcoming the barriers to computerisation	61
Summary of GP computing	62
3.2.5 GP requirements for accessing an EMR	62
3.2.6 Effects of non-GPs on GP access to EMR	64
3.2.7 Identification of CSFs for GP computing and EMRs	65
SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THREE	67
CHAPTER FOUR - RESEARCH APPROACH	68
4.1 An argument for rigour	68
4.1.1 ethical considerations	69
4.1.2 economic considerations	71

4.2 Research area	72
4.3 Theory development for EMR access systems	72
4.4 Theoretical model development	75
4.4.1 Initial theoretical model	75
4.4.2 Initial hypotheses	78
4.4.3 Final hypotheses	78
4.4.4. Final Theoretical Model	84
4.4.5 Research questions	84
 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOUR	 86
 CHAPTER FIVE - RESEARCH DESIGN (INSTRUMENTS AND METHODS)	 87
 5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN	 87
 5.2 RESEARCH METHOD: SURVEY RESEARCH	 88
 5.3 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE	 89
 5.4 SURVEY MANAGEMENT	 90
5.4.1 Planning and consultation	91
5.4.2 Data collection technique	91
5.4.3 Operationalisation	95
Variable operationalisation	99
Reliability and Validity	99
5.4.4 Sample identification	101
Identification of a target population	101
The sampling unit	104
Sampling size	104
5.4.5 Design of data collection instrument - Questionnaire design	106
Content of the questionnaire	107

Structure of the questionnaire	109
Pretesting/pilot surveys:	111
Response rates:	115
5.5 RESEARCH DESIGN SUMMARY	117
SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIVE	119
CHAPTER SIX - PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS	121
6.1 Response Rates:	121
6.2 Demographics:	122
General practitioner	122
Midwives	125
Obstetric specialists	126
Occupation:	126
Age and gender:	126
Practice computing:	128
Computer Training:	130
Computer experience:	130
6.3 Electronic Medical Record Use:	132
Computer Use:	132
Ranking of user acceptance, ease of use and usefulness:	133
When would an EMR be used:	135
User acceptance:	136
Support and Training:	138
Perceived Usefulness:	140
Perceived Ease of use:	141
EUC success	142
Uses of an EMR:	142
Access to the EMR data:	143
What does an EMR mean to you?	144
Obstetric information stored in an EMR:	148
CHAPTER SEVEN - HYPOTHESES AND MODEL TESTING	151

7.1 Hypotheses Testing	151
7.2 Support for the theoretical model	157
SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SEVEN	158
CHAPTER EIGHT - DISCUSSION	159
8.1 PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SURVEY	159
8.1.1 Generalisability	159
8.1.2. Reliability and validity	160
8.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SECONDARY HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS	160
8.2.1 The need for computer training	160
8.2.2 Practice computerisation and cost	161
8.2.3 User acceptance, patient consent, incomplete data	163
8.2.4 Perceived usefulness and ease of use	164
8.2.5 Support	164
8.2.6 EMR uses	164
8.2.7 EMR access	165
8.2.8 Meaning of an EMR	165
CHAPTER NINE - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	167
9.1 CONCLUSIONS	167
9.2 RECOMMENDATIONS	169
9.3 THESIS SUMMARY	170

GLOSSARY	171
APPENDIX ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW JOURNAL LIST	174
APPENDIX TWO: DEFINITION OF VARIABLES	175
APPENDIX THREE: PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE	185
APPENDIX FOUR: COVER LETTER	199
REFERENCES:	200

List of figures and/or tables

<i>Table 1: List of potential critical success factors.</i>	66
<i>Figure 1: Initial Theoretical Research Model.</i>	77
<i>Figure 2: Final theoretical model of critical success factors for electronic medical records access systems showing the final hypotheses.</i>	85
<i>Table 2: Computerised tasks by practice and GP</i>	124
<i>Table 3: Respondents by occupation</i>	126
<i>Table 4: Respondents by age and gender</i>	127
<i>Table 5: Practice computerisation by occupation</i>	129
<i>Table 6: Computer training</i>	130
<i>Table 7: Self-reported level of computer experience by age</i>	131
<i>Table 8: Variables of user acceptance, ease of use and usefulness of an EMR</i>	132
<i>Table 9: User acceptance, ease of use and usefulness of an EMR by response</i>	133
<i>Table 10: Ranking of user acceptance, ease of use and usefulness</i>	134
<i>Table 11: Ranking of user acceptance, ease of use and usefulness by occupation</i>	134
<i>Table 12: Benefit and cost components of a contract</i>	135
<i>Table 13: Types of benefits of an EMR</i>	136
<i>Table 14: Variables related to user acceptance</i>	137
<i>Table 15: Sources of support and training</i>	138
<i>Table 16: Ranking of sources of support and training</i>	139
<i>Table 17: Variables related to perceived usefulness</i>	140
<i>Table 18: Variables related to Perceived Ease of use</i>	141
<i>Table 19: Uses for which an EMR can be accessed</i>	143
<i>Table 20: Access to an EMR</i>	143
<i>Table 21: Access to an EMR by occupation</i>	144