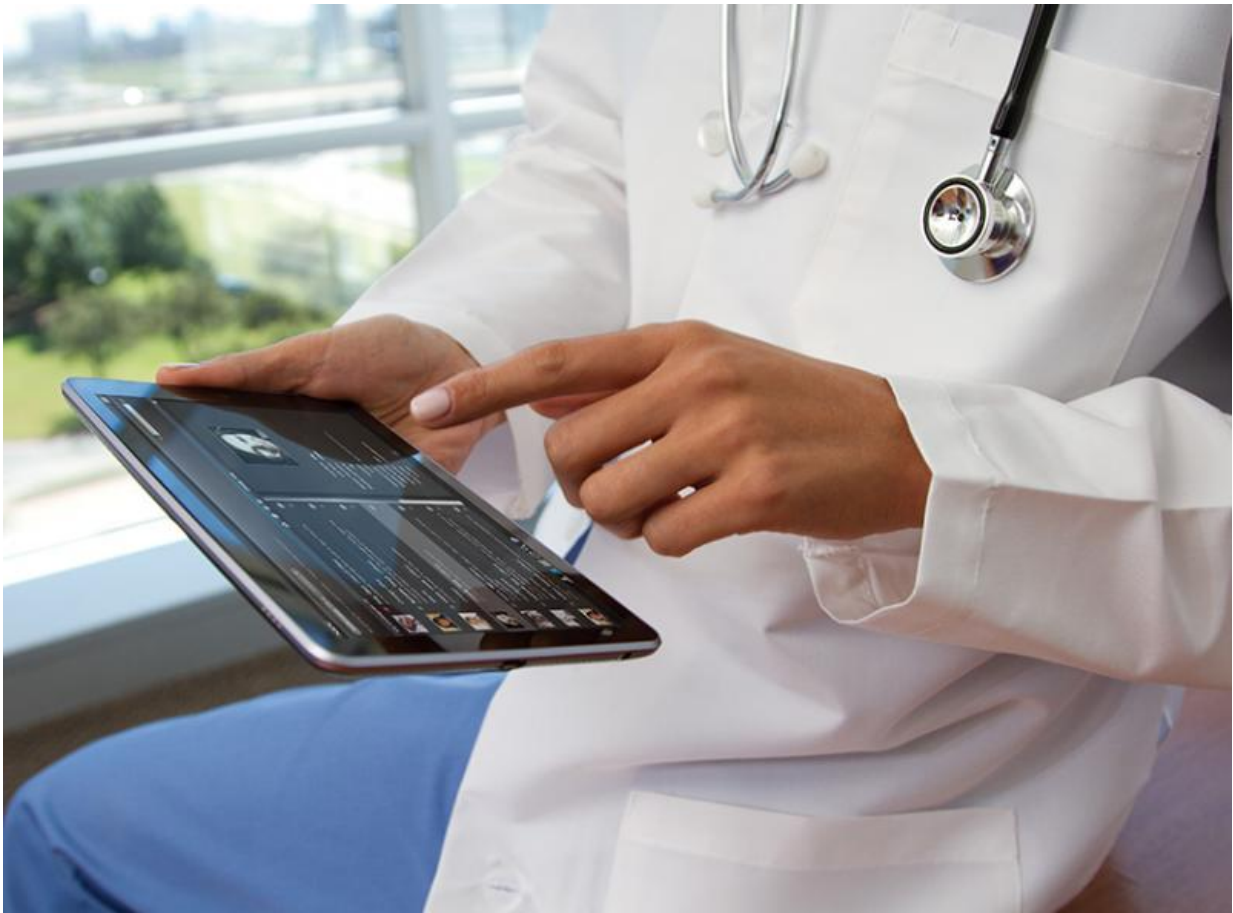


Improved patient outcomes linked to specific health IT resources in hospitals

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Credit: University of Missouri-Columbia

The number of health information technology vendors has increased from 60 to more than 1,000 since 2008. However, many scholars have

expressed concerns that such services are flooding the market without proper development, making hospitals more susceptible to adopting dysfunctional IT systems that are not geared toward the original goal of improving patient care. Now, a University of Missouri School of Medicine researcher has identified three IT capabilities hospitals should have that lead to higher rates of employee productivity and flexibility. The researcher said greater employee productivity leads to improved patient care in U.S. hospitals.

"Health information technologies have a great potential to improve patient safety and reduce cost of care," said Naresh Khatri, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Health Management and Informatics at the MU School of Medicine. "However, the benefits of these services have remained far from realized due to a lack of proper implementation. This study found that specific IT capabilities boosted employee efforts and flexibility, leading to improved patient care."

Khatri and his research team surveyed representatives from more than 450 hospitals across the U.S. The team asked questions related to hospitals' IT capabilities, quality of patient care and the productivity and flexibility of their employees, with "flexibility" defined as employees' being willing to take on increasing workloads during challenging times.

The team used the survey answers to test whether the relationship of certain IT capabilities and the quality of patient care delivered could be controlled by employee productivity. The researchers found that certain IT capabilities had significant positive correlations with employee productivity, which in turn improved the quality of patient care in U.S. hospitals.

Khatri said the three IT capabilities U.S. hospitals needed for more productive employees include having a competent and visionary chief information officer, an IT infrastructure designed to develop IT

applications that improve [patient care](#) and business processes, and on-site IT professionals with expertise developing cost-effective IT programs that support clinical and business needs of the organization.

"To deliver exemplary care, health care workers need technologies that can support them in their interactions with patients," Khatri said. "This means moving from clinician-centric to patient-centric IT models."

Overall, Khatri's study suggests that hospitals with greater IT capabilities may get more out of their IT investments because they can identify more appropriate, potent and cost-effective [health information](#) technologies that can be deployed more effectively.

Khatri's study, "[Effective Implementation of Electronic Medical Records and Health Information Technologies in U.S. Hospitals](#)," recently was published in *Health Care Management Review*.

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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