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Doctors mistrust electronic records

(Source: [The Advocate](#))

Louisiana physicians aren't embracing electronic medical records despite incentives and potential penalties dictated by a federal law, according to an LSU study released Wednesday.

The study concludes doctors show a high level of distrust toward two entities encouraging adoption of electronic medical records systems: the federal government and health maintenance organizations.

In addition, the researchers said physicians do not believe they have sufficient time in already stressed schedules to learn a system they don't think will help improve health-care quality.

The report is the result of a joint study between LSU and the Louisiana State Medical Society.

The study was conducted by Drs. Andrew Schwarz and Colleen Schwarz, professors with the LSU E.J. Ourso College of Business and the Center for Computation and Technology.

The web-based survey included 594 Louisiana physicians. About half had adopted electronic medical records and half had not, according to the survey.

"It's a natural tendency of us as humans to resist change," said Dr. Dean Griffen, a Shreveport surgeon and president of the Medical Society. "Everybody just keeps hoping it will all go away."

Griffen said the Medical Society is trying to give physicians the information they need so they can make the decisions appropriate for their practices.

Researcher Andrew Schwarz said it is clear that there is no national strategy for deploying EMR solutions.

"This is a case of believing in the power of technology to solve problems that there is no way that it reasonably can," Schwarz said.

"Rather than taking our time and setting a national strategy, stimulus money and incentive pressure is being put on physicians to adopt questionable technology that is not proven to result in the outcomes that we hope to achieve."

Schwarz said national literature has been putting a lot of the blame on doctors for not adopting the technology, contending they do not want to keep up with the times.

"But we found that doctors have very rational reasons why they were rejecting this technology," he said.

There is "a broad distrust" among physicians about the federal government getting more and more involved in the delivery of health care, said Schwarz.

Colleen Schwarz said physicians think the system will be used to grade or judge them on their performance. "What is government going to do when they get this information?" she said they ask.

Colleen Schwarz said many doctors question the widely accepted notion that electronic medical records will reduce the amount of errors and increase the quality of care.

Griffen said those using electronic medical records today find they are seeing fewer patients because of the extra time required to deal with the system.

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