

An Integrated Model to Share Patient Health Records in Public and Private Hospitals in South Africa

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ABSTRACT This paper investigated how patient health information is transferred and shared between government owned hospitals and private hospitals in South Africa. A case study approach was used. Participants were selected from a population group of doctors. Ten doctors were selected from five government and five private hospitals for interviews. Data was collected using semi-structured open ended interview questions. Doctors were asked to tell in their own words how patient data are stored, managed and transmitted when patients move from one government hospital to another government hospital as well as from one government hospital to a private hospital and vice versa. The findings revealed that Patient health information created in government or private hospital are stored, managed and transmitted in paper or electronic form exclusively within that hospital. No patient data is shared between the government and government hospital or between government and private hospital. The results led to the recommendation of integrated electronic health record model to assist doctors share patient information between private and government hospitals.