A qualitative analysis of the Health Informatics role in addressing the public health crisis of addiction and overall effectiveness of treatment.

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Abstract

In recent years, the implementation of Health Information Management (HIM) data systems has had significant positive impacts in nearly all aspects of both health and healthcare delivery. However, during this time, there has also been a dramatic increase in the demand for addiction and mental health treatment. The rising number of individuals requiring mental health treatment for addiction has resulted in its declaration as an urgent public health epidemic by the Department of Health and Human Services. The all-encompassing effects of addiction are prevalent in all areas of society, seen in the form of across-the-board rising healthcare costs, addiction related crime rate increases, overcrowded prisons, and an inefficient system of communication among overwhelmed mental healthcare professionals and law enforcement officials. A qualitative survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire provided to voluntary participants currently employed as medical and law enforcement professionals. Participants were selected based on their relevant experience with either treating addiction, and/or having firsthand experience with battling addiction themselves. Participants were encouraged to take into consideration the HIM systems in which they currently utilize when providing treatment, and provide evaluative input with emphasis on areas of desired future improvements and enhancements that may assist future HIM professionals envision more efficient mental health and addiction treatment database structures.