

Poll Indicates Strong Support For New Medical Technologies

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While few Americans have experienced new medical technologies like electronic medical records and digital imaging equipment in their doctors' office, a new Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive health-care poll shows a large majority are in favor of having their doctors adopt new technologies in their practices.

Furthermore, most adults believe that new medical technologies will either reduce the costs of medical care or are worth the investment because they will improve the quality of care, according to the online survey of 2,048 adults.

"The perception is that these technologies lead to better diagnostics and make possible less-invasive surgery," says Katherine Binns, senior vice president at Harris Interactive.

While home monitoring devices are currently used for very specific chronic conditions such as pulmonary disease, the polls shows a significant acceptance (83%) for routine monitoring of blood pressure or other blood tests that could be sent to the doctor's office by email or over the telephone. And more than three-quarters of those polled favor using electronic medical records to capture medical information, or digital imaging equipment that allows the doctor to send pictures or other images via email.

Technologies such as email and home monitoring devices "offer a clear benefit for patients in terms of convenience," so that patients do not have to go into the doctor's office for simple communication or procedures, says Ms. Binns.

At the same time, biometric technology, which uses internal imaging to capture characteristics of a person's body part, is seen as an acceptable component for ensuring greater protection of medical records: 71% of those polled said they would favor applying this technology to protect patients' medical records, compared with 17% who would oppose it, and another 15% who say they aren't sure.

---[Becky Bright](#)

See full results of the poll:

EXPERIENCE WITH NEW MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES

"Which of the following new technologies, if any, has a doctor ever used for you or a member of your family during a doctor visit or to provide or discuss follow-up treatment? Please select all that apply."

Based: All Adults

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| An electronic medical record to capture medical information | 16% |
| A personal digital device like a Palm Pilot or a hand held computer to record information | 14 |
| Email to communicate directly with you or a family member | 8 |
| Digital imaging equipment that allows the doctor to send pictures or other images via email | 8 |
| A home monitoring device that allows you to send medical information -- like blood pressure readings or blood tests - - to the doctor's office via the telephone or email | 5 |
| None of these | 55 |
| Not sure | 12 |

Note: Multiple-response question.

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SUPPORT FOR THE ADOPTION OF NEW MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES

"Based on what you know or have heard, how do you feel about having your doctor(s) use of these types of new technologies when caring for you or a family member?"

Base: All Adults

| | Favor Strongly/Somewhat (NET) | Strongly Favor | Favor Somewhat | Oppose Strongly/Somewhat (NET) | Oppose Somewhat | Strongly Oppose | Not Sure |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| An electronic medical record to capture medical information | 78% | 42% | 36% | 9% | 5% | 5% | 13% |
| Email to communicate directly with you or a family member | 81 | 49 | 32 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 10 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|
| member | | | | | | | |
| A personal digital device like a Palm Pilot or a hand held computer to record information | 75 | 37 | 38 | 11 | 7 | 4 | 14 |
| Digital imaging equipment that allows the doctor to send pictures or other images via email | 78 | 44 | 34 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 13 |
| A home monitoring device that allows you to send medical information – like blood pressure readings or blood tests – to the doctor's office via the telephone or email | 83 | 51 | 33 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 11 |

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

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SUPPORT FOR THE USE OF IMAGING TO PROTECT PATIENT PRIVACY

"New technology is being developed that uses internal imaging to capture characteristics of a person's body part – like the veins in the palm of the hand – to confirm that person's identity. To what extent would you favor or oppose using this type of technology to help protect patients' medical records (i.e., to restrict release or use of medical records without such verification)?"

Base: All Adults

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Favor Strongly/Somewhat (NET) | 71% |
| Strongly favor | 33 |
| Favor somewhat | 38 |
| Oppose Strongly/Somewhat (NET) | 15 |
| Oppose somewhat | 9 |
| Strongly oppose | 6 |
| Not sure | 14 |

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

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PERCEPTIONS OF THE VALUE OF NEW MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES

"Which one of the following statements do you tend to agree with most?"

Base: All Adults

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| New technologies like electronic medical records and digital imaging devices are worth the money they cost because they will improve patient care. | 31% |
| New technologies like electronic medical records and digital imaging devices cost more money than they are worth. | 10 |
| New technologies like electronic medical records and digital imaging devices will ultimately reduce the costs of medical care. | 36 |
| Not sure | 23 |

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Methodology:

Harris Interactive conducted this online survey within the U.S. between Sept. 30 and Oct. 4, 2005 among a nationwide cross section of 2,048 adults. Figures for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income and region were weighted where necessary to align with population proportions. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. In theory, with probability samples of this size, one can say with 95% certainty that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 3

percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population had been polled with complete accuracy.