

Associated Cardiovascular Consultants



John J. Morris, CMPE
Executive Director

Data Mining

"Amicore's EMR makes accurate data mining easy and has allowed us to negotiate much better contracts with our insurers and HMOs. Three years ago, our insurance company asked us to improve care based on data they had compiled on 50 of our patients. We said, how about if we show you results from 3,000 patients that indicate we are exceeding your criteria? They were impressed to say the least, and began listening to us more seriously."

Benefits

- 3 Year ROI: Due to \$150,000 annual reduction in transcription costs
- More efficient staff: Increase physicians by 33% with no increase in support staff
- Better documentation: Resulting in reduced insurance costs and more favorable contracts with HMOs
- Improved delivery of care: EMR data allows better analysis of patient management

John Morris on Amicore:

As a practice administrator I assess our EMR from a different perspective than our physicians. Amicore's Clinical Management software has benefited our group in a couple of ways. First, it brought greater efficiency to the way we practice medicine and increased the quality of care to our patients. Second, it has enabled us to glean information from our records through data mining and demonstrate high rates of compliance with guidelines for best practices. This information is instrumental in negotiating favorable contracts and rate reductions from insurers and HMOs who are offering new "pay for quality" programs.

After implementing ACM in 2000, physicians responded positively to the convenience of having anytime, anywhere access to records. All physicians have high speed internet access and wireless networks in their homes. Their response to the Tablet PC was excellent. Combined with the easy-to-customize templates provided by Amicore, the technology integrated well into the workflow of their individual practice styles.

Data mining allowed us to demonstrate its adherence to best practices, winning recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA). This has resulted in national recognition of ACC's cardiologists as providing excellent care. In the future I think we will see more programs like this, because beyond the benefits of professional recognition and improved patient care, these programs will assume greater significance among the consumer population, as consumer-directed health plans take hold. Consumers will expect reliable sources for decision support when spending healthcare dollars.

We also use data mining to improve delivery of care. In one instance, initial analysis showed that 91% of our patients were being prescribed the proper regimen and doctors were alerted to review the 9% that weren't. This resulted in improved patient management – within a year 93.8% were following the correct regimen and we expect that number will continue to improve as data mining allows review and refinement of patient management.

Our insurers and HMOs have been impressed with our ability to demonstrate our standard of care, pinpointed on a case-by-case basis. Today we are proactive and take the lead in calling insurance companies about quality improvements we can document through data mining. We negotiated contracts with several companies providing more favorable rates in exchange for meeting specific care guidelines that save them money. We secured a \$25,000 per year reduction in malpractice premiums after implementing ACM. Currently malpractice insurers seem focused on the value of e-prescriptions, and there are certainly good reasons for offering discounts to those who have adopted this technology. Over time though, I think it will be common to obtain additional discounts through the ability to use data mining to show adherence to best practices.

It seems to me that greater benefits from data mining the EMR are yet to come. Our EMR has helped identify patients who are good candidates for clinical trials. In the future ACC intends to be more proactive in data mining for candidates who meet exact criteria for participation in pharmaceutical trials, resulting in a greater number of patients being able to benefit. The knowledge that emerges as we aggregate our data (and that of other cardiologists nationwide) will be able to be queried by researchers and amazing things may come from the ability to have that wealth of information easily accessible to everyone in our profession.

John Morris is executive director for Associated Cardiovascular Consultants, based in New Jersey.

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