

Insight Driven Health

Consumers with Chronic Conditions Believe the Ability to Access Electronic Medical Records Outweighs Concern of Privacy Invasion



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Accenture's research shows consumers with chronic conditions are more concerned about the privacy of shopping and banking transactions than healthcare information.

More than half (51 percent) of U.S. consumers with chronic conditions believe the benefits of being able to access medical information through electronic medical records (EMR) outweigh the perceived risk of privacy invasion, according to the Accenture 2014 Patient Engagement Survey of more than 2,000 U.S. consumers.

Interestingly, the differences among consumers with chronic conditions are notable. The highest percentage of individuals believing the benefits of EMR outweigh the privacy risk was among those with cancer (57 percent), while asthma and arthritis sufferers show the lowest percentage (48 percent, respectively).

EMR: is it a right, or a privilege?

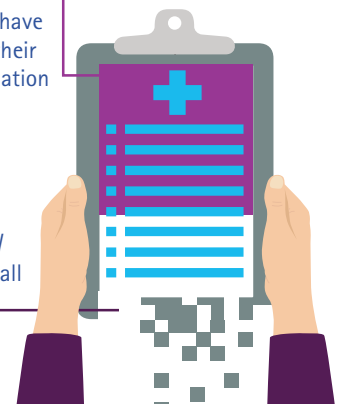
The Accenture 2014 Patient Engagement Survey revealed that consumers with chronic conditions believe it is their right to access their EMR. Particularly, 69 percent say having access to health data is a right and they want to access all of their information.

The survey findings also showed that these consumers with chronic conditions want control, but feel they don't have it. Eighty-seven percent believe it is "somewhat" or "very" important to have control over their health information, yet more than half (55 percent) believe they do not have very much control—or any control at all. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. A majority of consumers with chronic conditions believe it is important to have control over their health information, yet more than half feels they don't have control.

87% believe it is important to have control over their health information

55% believe they have not very much control/ no control at all

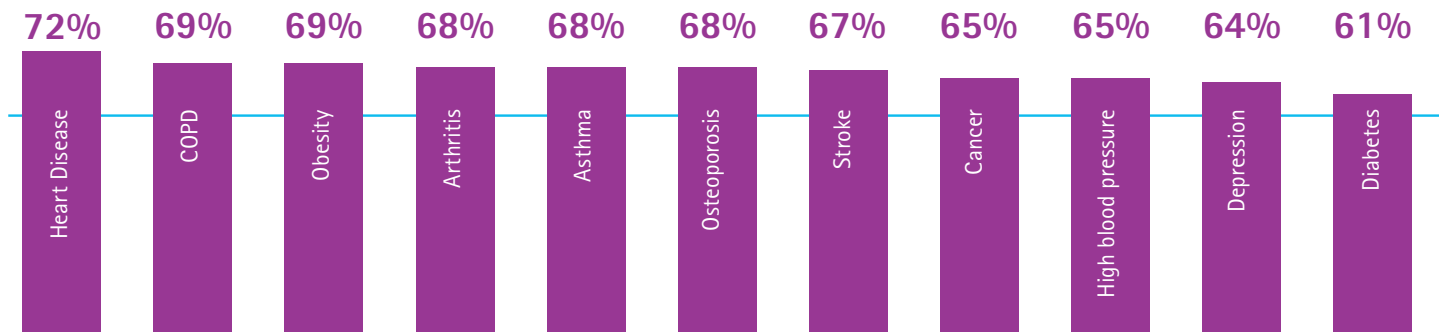


Source: Accenture 2014 Patient Engagement Survey

Q. How much control do you currently have over your health information?



Figure 3. "Very" or "somewhat" concerned about EMR personal privacy—ranked by chronic condition.



Source: Accenture 2014 Patient Engagement Survey

Q. How concerned are you about your personal privacy in each of the following areas [electronic medical records]?

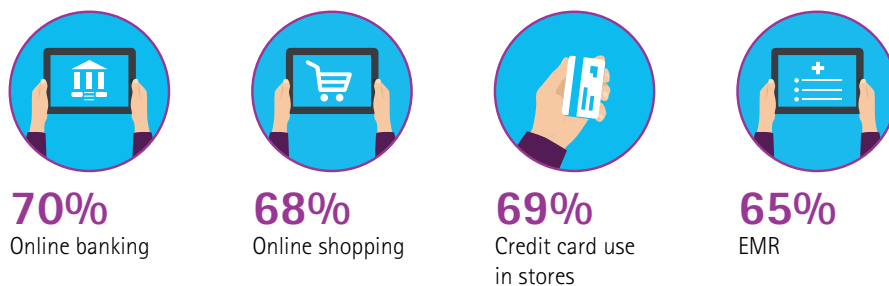
Interestingly, when asked, "How much control do you currently have over your health information? By control, we mean that you have access to your medical records and could use these records to make decisions about your personal care if you wanted to," 65 percent of those with heart disease said they have "complete" or "some" control versus 49 percent of those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) said they have the same level of control.

This information is timely as providers are striving to achieve Meaningful Use Stage 2, where providing access to medical information is a core measure. Specifically, the objective of Measure 7 is to "Provide patients the ability to view online, download and transmit their health information within four business days of the information being available to the eligible professional."¹¹

Privacy concerns are similar, whether accessing EMR or shopping online

Survey respondents with chronic conditions are less concerned with EMR data privacy than they are with data privacy in a number of other industries. Overall, chronically ill consumers surveyed said they are "somewhat" or "very" concerned about privacy invasion with EMR (65 percent), online banking (70 percent), online shopping (68 percent) and credit card use in stores (69 percent). See Figure 2.

Figure 2. Concern about privacy invasion in ranking order of percentage of consumers with chronic conditions who are concerned.



Source: Accenture 2014 Patient Engagement Survey

Q. How concerned are you about your personal privacy in each of the following areas [Percentage reflects those who chose "somewhat" and "very" concerned]?

Level of concern about EMR data privacy varies by chronic condition. Those with heart disease showed the highest level of concern, with 72 percent identifying themselves as "very" or "somewhat" concerned, and diabetics showed the lowest level of concern, with 61 percent "very" or "somewhat" concerned. See Figure 3.

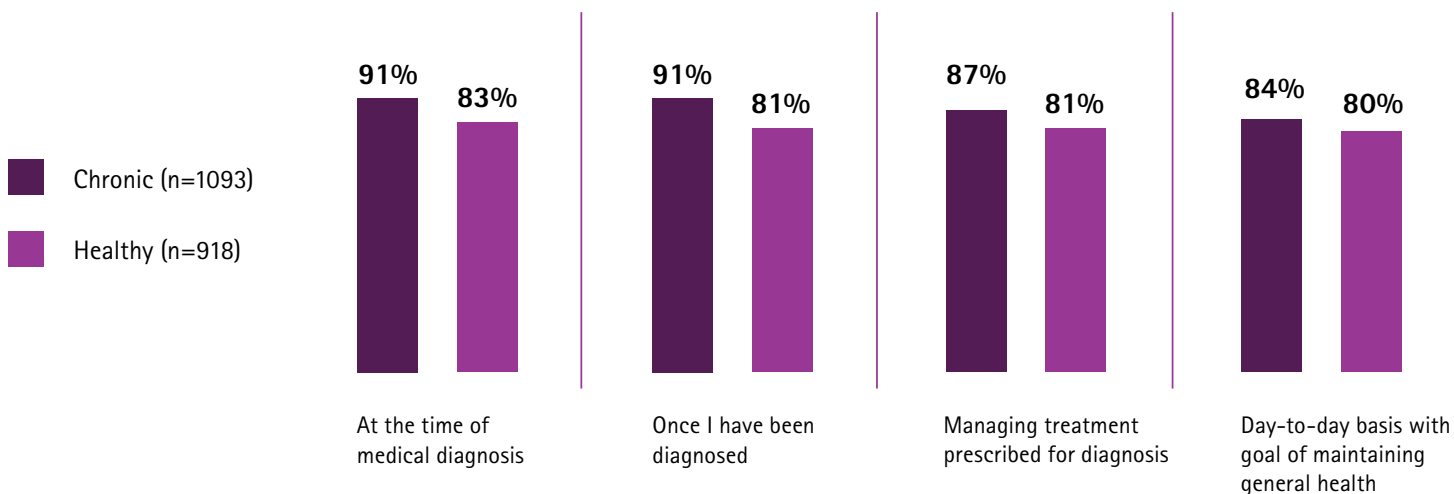
Those with chronic conditions may be more active in some ways

Consumers with chronic conditions access their EMR more than healthy consumers, according to the Accenture 2014 Patient Engagement Survey. When asked, "Have you ever accessed your electronic medical records?" 30 percent

of those with chronic conditions said they have accessed their EMR versus 24 percent of healthy respondents.

The survey revealed that significantly more chronically ill than healthy consumers are active in managing their health in the following stages: at the time of medical diagnosis (87 percent vs. 81 percent), once they have been diagnosed (91 percent vs. 83 percent), managing treatment prescribed for diagnosis (91 percent vs. 81 percent) and day-to-day in managing general health (84 percent vs. 80 percent). See Figure 4.

Figure 4. At most stages, consumers with chronic conditions are more actively engaged in managing their health than their healthy counterparts.*



Source: Accenture 2014 Patient Engagement Survey

Q. On a day-to-day basis, how active are you in managing your health at each of the following health stages?

*Percentages reflect sum of "very active" and "somewhat active."

Why aren't consumers with chronic conditions accessing their EMR?

According to the Accenture 2014 Patient Engagement Survey, "I don't know how to access my medical records" was the primary reason that people had not accessed their medical record. More than half (55 percent) cited this as the top reason.

Interestingly, 17 percent of consumers with chronic conditions surveyed said, "I trust that my medical records are accurate, so I don't need to access them." A surprising 31 percent of those with cancer cited this as a reason for not accessing their EMR.

The research findings confirm that people—particularly the chronically ill—want access to their medical information. As consumers increasingly expect medical information to be available online, and as federal legislation supports that trend, it will be interesting to see how the percentage of people accessing their EMR will shift over time.

Figure 5. Top two reasons why consumers with chronic conditions are not accessing their EMRs.



Source: Accenture 2014 Patient Engagement Survey

Q. What is the primary reason why you have not accessed your electronic medical records?

Methodology

Accenture conducted a survey of 10,730 individuals in 10 countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Italy, Japan, Norway, Singapore, Spain, United Kingdom and the United States. The survey included chronically ill consumers (defined as those who self-reported they have been diagnosed with any of the following conditions: asthma, arthritis, cancer, COPD or related respiratory condition, depression, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, clinically diagnosed obesity, osteoporosis, stroke) and healthy consumers (defined as those not suffering from any of the chronic illnesses listed previously). The survey was conducted between February 18–March 16, 2014 by Penn Schoen Berland (PSB).

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¹ http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/EHRIncentivePrograms/downloads/Stage2_EPCore_7_PatientElectronicAccess.pdf