Guiding principles for the optimal use of data analytics by physicians at the point of care

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Executive Summary

Electronic health records are being used more widely in creating their own libraries, a majority of physicians in Canada have models that are marketed for this purpose. Analytics and data analytics are tools that can be used to create libraries and models that help in better patient care. The use of analytics by physicians is growing. However, not much attention has been paid to the ethical, legal and social implications of this process. This policy document is intended to provide a framework for ethical use of analytics by physicians, thereby ensuring that patient care is not adversely affected.

Ethical use of analytics in patient care is ensuring the right balance between managing the challenges of big data, such as confidentiality, openness, and transparency, while respecting the ethical principles of health care. Physicians should be mindful of the potential risks and benefits of using analytics in patient care, and they should be prepared to address these risks and benefits in a thoughtful and transparent manner.

This policy document includes the following principles:

1. Physicians should obtain informed consent from patients before collecting or using data from electronic health records.
2. Physicians should ensure that data used for analytics are de-identified or anonymized to protect patient privacy.
3. Physicians should consider the implications of their use of analytics on patient care and the potential impact on patient outcomes.
4. Physicians should be transparent about the use of analytics in their patient care and be prepared to answer questions from patients and other stakeholders.
5. Physicians should be accountable for the ethical use of analytics in their practice and should be prepared to be held accountable for any harms that may arise.

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