

Paper- and computer-based workarounds to electronic health record use at three benchmark institutions.

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This ethnographic study used direct observations in 11 primary care clinics with an integrated electronic health record (EHR) to characterize the extent and types of workarounds used by clinicians and support staff. As with prior [classic research](#), the investigators found several different types of paper- and computer-based workarounds, with most being used to aid memory, improve efficiency, or enhance provider awareness of specific clinical problems. For example, several instances of [copying and pasting](#) clinical information from note to note were observed, despite this practice being against the institution's policy. Workarounds are generally regarded as representing EHR design failures, but the authors argue that it is unrealistic to expect EHRs to completely obviate the need for paper-based cognitive aids. They advocate for incorporating data on common types of workarounds into [human factors](#)-based approaches to improving EHR usability.