



HOW ACCURATE ARE SOCIAL NEEDS IN ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS?

Health-related social needs, sometimes called social determinants, include nonmedical issues like food insecurity, housing instability, and transportation barriers. These factors effect patients' health and well-being and drive costs and unnecessary utilization. Health-related social needs are a growing focus of attention for providers, payers, and policy makers. increasingly health systems and hospitals are expected to screen patients for health-related social needs. Screening is now quality measure from CMS and NCQA and a focus of the Joint Commission.

However, available health-related social needs screening tools may not perform sufficiently to meet the needs of health systems and patients. A team of investigators, led by the Indiana University Fairbanks School of Public Health, measured the accuracy of a widely used health-related social need tool. The team surveyed more than 1,500 primary care patients using the screening tool available within a popular electronic health record (EHR) and a set of additional validated surveys that measured food insecurity, financial strain, and housing instability. Their findings were published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The EHR's health-related social needs screening tool significantly under-identified patients with housing instability and financial strain. Under-identification means patients are not connected to the resources they need and the health system misses opportunities to address the risks that drive care.

Check out the original article here: <https://go.iu.edu/4Rp0>

Figure 1. Percent of Patients with Social Factors per Screening Questionnaires and the External Criterion Instruments.

