

Advancements in healthcare technology have come a long way since electronic health records were first introduced, but with increased access to and collection of health data comes a responsibility to safeguard it from data breaches.

With this front of mind, the first issue for 2024 of the [Australian Health Review](#), the Australian Healthcare and Hospital Association's peer-reviewed journal, highlights research on digital health, and in particular, electronic health records (EHRs) and electronic medical record (EMR) systems.

'EHRs have been widely adopted in the Australian public healthcare system and yet recent data breaches, both here in Australia and globally, have drawn attention to the importance of health data security and its relating to seeking medical treatment,' says Acting Australian Health Review Editor-in-Chief Prof Christian Gericke.

'Research in this issue of the journal calls for action to not only improve risk mitigation associated with health data use but also consider the consequences that follow any data breach and provide support for patients and healthcare workers who might be affected. This could include identity theft protection services, cybersecurity insurance, and psychological support.'

Other research examines the possibilities of better healthcare data linkage and the barriers faced by researchers when attempting to connect data from across federal, state, local and other levels of the healthcare system.

'Data linkage is a very powerful research tool, however, establishing this can be a lengthy and intensive process.'

'In research from the Heart Research Institute, it was found that further streamlining, establishing accountability, and greater collaboration between jurisdictions is needed to ensure data linkage is both accessible and feasible to researchers. This can provide invaluable insights for patients, families, healthcare providers, systems planners, and governments.'

'There are also still areas where we need to improve the uptake and adoption of EMR systems and related technologies that can assist with health data collection,' continued Prof Gericke.

'For example, research in this issue has also shown the importance of using electronic medical record (EMR) systems for allied health professionals, so that they become more familiar and positive, and demonstrate less anxiety and apprehension towards their use.'

'It's helpful to have an understanding of what influences both health system staff and patients when implementing new technology, as this can inform change management strategies and improve adoption.'

The online version of this [media release](#) and links to the [Australian Health Review](#) can be found on the AHHA website. **The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the independent peak membership body and advocate for the Australian healthcare system and a national voice for universally accessible, high-quality healthcare in Australia.**

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