Chapter VII

The Dynamics of IT Adoption in a Major Change Process in Healthcare Delivery

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Abstract

The primary objective of the study presented in this chapter is to understand the dynamics of implementing an integrated information technology (IT) system designed to support the treatment of breast cancer. Preliminary findings permitted the identification of adoption and resistance factors at individual, professional, and organizational levels. These findings provided
insight into the potential challenges to be faced in redesigning work processes in an inter-organizational setting. Significant adoption factors included individual participation in the project and a positive assessment of benefits of the system by both individuals and professional groups. Alternatively, the absence of a multidisciplinary committee, coupled with the complexity of the environment, the tasks, and the technology were among factors identified as troublesome. In terms of the dynamics of the process itself, our observations revealed that promoters adopted a contingent and political approach. While this strategy is usually considered appropriate in healthcare organizations, information generated by this study will allow for a better understanding of important factors and mechanisms to consider and address in subsequent phases of implementation.

Introduction

Globally, new health challenges, coupled with scarce resources, are creating an overwhelming need to ensure that every dollar invested in healthcare is maximized to its fullest potential. It therefore becomes critical to evaluate the development, introduction, and use of clinical information systems. However, this task remains extremely challenging, in part because of the lack of information available to both health professionals and managers. As indicated in the chapter by Ammenwerth and Turunen, there exists no widely accepted framework for the evaluation of clinical information systems, neither in management nor in the medical field. As is the case with the experiences related in other chapters of this book, this study aims to better understand the dynamics of implementing medical information systems. More precisely, this chapter provides information regarding the factors and mechanisms that influence the outcome of integrated medical system implementations in an inter-organization context. Indeed, over the past 10 years, many healthcare organizations have responded to pressure to improve performance, quality, and patient satisfaction with an attempt to create integrated healthcare systems. Such systems can be defined as “a network of organizations that provides or arranges to provide a coordinated continuum of services to a defined population and is willing to be held clinically and fiscally accountable for the outcomes and the health status of the population served” (Shortell, Gillies, Anderson, Mitchell, & Morgan,
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