

# Patients May Have to Compete With Computers for Doctors' Attention

HealthDay

Jan. 30, 2014

Leave a Comment

SHARE



By Robert Preidt, *HealthDay Reporter*

THURSDAY, Jan. 30, 2014 (HealthDay News) -- Is "The doctor will see you now" turning into "The doctor will watch the screen?" A new study suggests that physicians may spend too much time looking at their computer screens when seeing patients.

The study found that those who use electronic health records in the examination room spend about one-third of patient visits looking at the computer screen, which interferes with their ability to interact with patients.



"When doctors spend that much time looking at the computer, it can be difficult for patients to get their attention," study first author Enid Montague, an assistant professor in medicine, general internal medicine and geriatrics at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, said in a university news release.

"It's likely that the ability to listen, problem-solve and think creatively is not optimal when physicians' eyes are glued to the screen," she said.

The researchers analyzed eye-gaze patterns and communication during 100 doctor-patient visits in which the doctors accessed electronic health records.

"We found that physician-patient eye-gaze patterns are different during a visit in which electronic health records versus a paper chart are used," Montague said. "Not only does the doctor spend less time looking at the patient, but the patient also almost always looks at the computer screen, whether or not the patient can see or understand what is on the screen."

The study was published online recently in the *International Journal of Medical Informatics*.

This type of research could lead to improved doctor training guidelines and better-designed electronic health care technology, the researchers said. For example, future systems could feature more interactive screen time between doctors and patients, Montague said.

## More information

The American Academy of Family Physicians offers [tips for talking to your doctor](#).

Copyright © 2014 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved. Copyright © 2014 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

TAGS: [internet](#), [doctors](#), [health](#)

+ More

Leave a Comment

---

You Might Also Like



[U.S. News Diet Rankings - See What Really Works](#)



[Top Recommended Health Products](#)



[Video: Top Chefs Talk Healthy Eating](#)

---

Copyright 2014 © U.S. News & World Report LP. Use of this website constitutes acceptance of Terms and Conditions / Privacy Policy.