Master Patient Index

Master Patient Index (MPI) is a database that maintains a unique index (or identifier) for every patient registered at a health care organization. The MPI is used by each registration application (or process) within the HCO to ensure a patient is logically represented only once and with the same set of registration demographic / registration data in all systems and at an organizational level. It can be used as an enterprise tool to assure that vital clinical and demographic information can be cross-referenced between different facilities in a health care system. A MPI correlates and cross-references patient identifiers and performs a matching function with high accuracy in an unattended mode. A MPI is considered an important resource in a healthcare facility because it is the link tracking patient, person, or member activity within an organization (or enterprise) and across patient care settings.

According to the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), some recommended core data elements for indexing and searching records include:

- Internal patient Identification
- Patient Name
- DOB
- DOB qualifier
- Gender
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Address
- Alias/pervious name
- SS#
- Facility identification
- Universal patient identifier (if available)
- Account number
- Admission date
- Discharge date
An enterprise master patient index (or enterprise-wide master patient index) is a database (linking several MPI’s together) that is used across a healthcare organization to maintain consistent, accurate and current demographic and essential medical data on the patients seen and managed within its various departments. The patient is assigned a unique identifier that is used to refer to this patient across the enterprise. The objective is to ensure that each patient is represented only once across all the software systems used within the organization.

EMPIs are intended to solve the common problem where multiple systems across the organization gradually become inconsistent with respect to the patient's most current data when the patient's information changes, and only one system is updated, i.e., the changes are not propagated to the others. A similar problem may be seen for non-healthcare organizations with respect to customer data.

Accurate patient identification ensures that the information presented by and entered into the EHR is associated with the correct person. Duplicate patient records are a common problem and can cause harm when clinicians lack complete records. Likewise, when two patients' records are comingled harm can result. An enterprise-wide master patient index reduces the occurrence of duplicate patient records by increasing the likelihood that patients with previous encounters are identified.
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