

Electronic Health Records.

FDI World Dental Federation · 2026

Study Guide: FDI Policy Statement on Electronic Health Records

This study guide provides a comprehensive overview of the FDI World Dental Federation's policy regarding the implementation, integration, and ethical management of Electronic Health Records (EHRs) within oral healthcare.

Key Concepts and Core Themes

1. Defining Electronic Health Records (EHRs)

The source context distinguishes between standard EHRs and Integrated EHRs:

- **Electronic Health Record (EHR):** A computer-processable repository containing information regarding the health status of a subject of care.
- **Integrated EHRs:** These records possess a broader scope by combining data from various healthcare systems—including both medical and dental disciplines—into a unified record. They are designed for high interoperability to enhance care coordination and provide a holistic view of patient health.

2. Functional Objectives of EHRs

EHRs serve four primary levels of objectives within the healthcare ecosystem:

1. **Clinical Documentation:** Maintaining patient info, recording consultations, documenting prescriptions (tests, medications, appliances), and managing referrals.
2. **Administration and Business Intelligence:** Supporting patient scheduling, communication, and business analytics.
3. **Data Transmission:** Facilitating the exchange of data for technical or remuneration purposes between patients, providers, and third parties.
4. **Public Health and Research:** Utilizing data for epidemiological studies, commissioning, and general research purposes.

3. Benefits and Potential Risks

The adoption of EHRs offers several systemic advantages:

- **Systematization and Accuracy:** High levels of comprehensiveness and data quality reduce inappropriate procedures.
- **Accountability:** Improved transparency, data ownership, and traceability (tracking changes made after the original entry).
- **Collaboration:** Facilitation of shared care plans and interprofessional collaboration.
- **Public Health Management:** Availability of data for research and public health surveillance.

4. Core Principles for Implementation

The oral health profession and policymakers are encouraged to follow three primary pillars:

- **Improvement of Care:** EHRs must support accessibility, quality, and safety while facilitating research through appropriate consent mechanisms.
- **Stakeholder Trust:** Ensuring compliance with data protection legislation, security, confidentiality, and traceability to build trust between patients, providers, and payers.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Systems should prioritize sustainability, usability, cost-effectiveness, and ease of implementation.

Short-Answer Practice Questions

Q1: According to the FDI policy, what role does interoperability play in Integrated EHRs? Answer:

High interoperability is essential for Integrated EHRs to enhance care coordination and continuity across various healthcare settings, ensuring a comprehensive view of the patient's health by unifying medical and dental data.

Q2: List two specific technical standards mentioned in the policy for the oral health community to follow. Answer:

The policy identifies Fast Health Interoperability Resources (FHIR) and Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine (DICOM) as key standards.

Q3: What are the requirements for data use in commercial research and development? Answer:

The policy states that in cases of commercial research, data donors should benefit from their data being used.

Q4: How should providers be prepared for EHR usage? Answer:

Providers should be adequately trained to use EHRs judiciously, understanding the various objectives involved and adhering to local data protection legislation.

Q5: What measure is recommended to ensure the accuracy and integrity of EHR entries over time? Answer:

EHRs should be designed to track any changes made after they were originally written and should undergo regular evaluation to assess their impact on data quality and clinical efficiency.

Essay Prompts for Deeper Exploration

1. Equity and Universal Healthcare in the Digital Age

The FDI Policy Statement emphasizes that EHRs should facilitate the World Health Organization's (WHO) "Universal Healthcare and Health for All" approach. Discuss how the implementation of EHRs can potentially aggravate social or medical inequities and what measures the policy suggests to prevent these outcomes, specifically regarding patient access and provider training.

2. The Integration of Oral and Systemic Health

Analyze the argument that oral health information must be integrated into shared electronic health records. How does the transition from siloed dental records to Integrated EHRs support "person-centered care," and what role do interdisciplinary development teams play in this transition?

3. Balancing Data-Driven Research with Patient Privacy

EHRs are described as "pivotal" for a data-driven oral health research model. Evaluate the tension between the need for large-scale data for public health management and the requirements for "robust anonymisation" and "transparent data use." How does the policy propose to encourage patients to participate in research while maintaining their trust?

Glossary of Important Terms

Term	Definition
DICOM	Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine; a standard for handling, storing, printing, and transmitting information in medical imaging.
EHR	Electronic Health Record; a digital repository of a subject's health status information.
FHIR	Fast Health Interoperability Resources; a standard for exchanging healthcare information electronically.
Interoperability	The ability of different information systems, devices, and applications to access, exchange, integrate, and cooperatively use data in a coordinated manner.
Integrated EHR	A unified record combining data from multiple disciplines (e.g., medical and dental) to provide a holistic view of patient health.
Remuneration	Payment or compensation for services provided; one of the functional purposes for data transmission in EHR systems.
Traceability	The ability to track the history and changes made to a record, ensuring accountability and data integrity.
Universal Healthcare	A health care system that provides health services to all citizens of a particular country or region, supported by FDI's policy on EHR equity.