Commentary
Volume 14:03, 2025

Journal of Nursing & Care

ISSN: 2167-1168 Open Access

Protecting Patient Information: Ethical and Legal Responsibilities of Nurses in Digital Care

Dmitry Andres*

Department of Nursing Education, University of Insubria, Varese, Italy

Introduction

As healthcare transitions into a digital age, the management of patient information has become increasingly complex, raising critical ethical and legal concerns. Nurses, being at the forefront of patient care, are entrusted with safeguarding sensitive health data while using electronic systems, mobile apps and telehealth platforms. The digitalization of care demands that nurses understand and uphold the principles of confidentiality, privacy and data security cornerstones of ethical practice. This article explores the ethical and legal responsibilities of nurses in the digital era, highlighting best practices and policies to protect patient information and preserve trust in nurse-patient relationships [1].

Description

Electronic Health Records (EHRs), cloud storage and connected health devices have revolutionized care coordination and access to information. However, they also introduce risks such as unauthorized access, data breaches and cyberattacks. Nurses must remain vigilant about these vulnerabilities and practice due diligence when handling digital records. Confidentiality is a foundational ethical principle in nursing, rooted in respect for patient autonomy and dignity. The American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics emphasizes that nurses must safeguard all personal patient data, whether spoken, written, or stored electronically. Breaches of confidentiality not only damage trust but can also cause psychological, social and financial harm to patients. Laws such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the U.S., the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the EU and similar national regulations set standards for the protection of health information. Nurses must understand relevant laws governing data sharing, storage and disclosure, including when information can be legally shared for instance, during public health emergencies or with patient consent [2].

Nurses are responsible for accurate documentation in EHRs while ensuring only authorized personnel have access. Secure login practices, logging off unattended devices and reporting unauthorized access are essential habits. Nurses must also avoid sharing patient information through unsecured channels such as personal emails, messaging apps, or social media. Ongoing education in health informatics and data privacy is critical. Healthcare institutions must provide nurses with regular training on cybersecurity, phishing awareness and digital ethics. Nursing curricula should incorporate case-based scenarios to prepare future professionals for real-world ethical dilemmas in digital care.

***Address for Correspondence:** Dmitry Andres, Department of Nursing Education, University of Insubria, Varese, Italy, E-mail: andres.dmitry@insubria.it*

Received: 02 June, 2025, Manuscript No. jnc-25-171658; **Editor Assigned:** 04 June, 2025, Pre QC No. P-171658; **Reviewed:** 16 June, 2025, QC No. Q-171658; **Revised:** 23 June, 2025, Manuscript No. R-171658; **Published:** 30 June, 2025, DOI: 10.37421/2167-1168.2025.14.708

Digital care can present nuanced ethical challenges for example, what to do when a patient inadvertently discloses sensitive information during a telehealth visit in a shared household. Nurses must be trained to respond sensitively while adhering to privacy protocols. In cases of potential breaches, they should follow institutional reporting procedures and contribute to corrective actions. Nurses must advocate for systems and practices that prioritize patient privacy. This includes participating in the design of health IT systems to ensure usability and security and educating patients about how their data is used. Nurses also serve as gatekeepers balancing information sharing with other team members against patient confidentiality [3-4].

The increasing integration of digital technologies into healthcare has transformed patient care but also raised critical concerns about privacy and data protection. Nurses, as frontline healthcare providers, play a vital role in safeguarding sensitive patient information within electronic health records, telehealth systems and mobile health applications. Maintaining strict adherence to these principles not only upholds patient trust but also prevents potential misuse or unauthorized disclosure of private information. In the digital era, nurses must exercise diligence when accessing patient records, using secure communication channels and ensuring that electronic devices are protected from breaches or theft. From a legal standpoint, nurses are bound by data protection regulations such as the Health Insurance Portability and Regular training on cybersecurity practices, digital ethics and institutional privacy policies empowers nurses to identify and respond to data threats effectively. Ultimately, protecting patient information is not only a legal duty but also an ethical obligation that reflects professional integrity and respect for patient dignity. By embracing these responsibilities, nurses can contribute to a trustworthy and secure digital healthcare environment that prioritizes patient welfare and confidentiality [5].

Conclusion

In the digital age, the ethical and legal responsibility of protecting patient information rests heavily on nurses. As healthcare delivery increasingly relies on electronic systems, nurses must uphold professional standards while navigating evolving technologies and regulations. By fostering ethical awareness, practicing secure documentation and advocating for robust data protection measures, nurses play a pivotal role in maintaining patient trust and ensuring safe, confidential care in a digitally connected world.

Acknowledgement

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

References

1. He, Ying, Aliyu Aliyu, Mark Evans and Cunjin Luo. "Health care cybersecurity challenges and solutions under the climate of COVID-19: Scoping review." *J Med Internet Res* 23 (2021): e21747.

2. Fagerstrom, Cecilia, Hanna Tuvesson, Lisa Axelsson and Lina Nilsson. "The role of ICT in nursing practice: An integrative literature review of the Swedish context." *Scand J Caring Sci* 31 (2017): 434-448.

3. Jouparinejad, Somayeh, Golnaz Foroughameri, Reza Khajouei and Jamileh Farokhzadian. "Improving the informatics competency of critical care nurses: Results of an interventional study in the southeast of Iran." *BMC Med Inform Decis Mak* 20 (2020): 1-12.

4. Khanna, Narendra N., Mahesh A. Maindarkar, Vijay Viswanathan and Jose Fernandes E. Fernandes, et al. "Economics of artificial intelligence in healthcare: Diagnosis vs. treatment." *Healthcare* 10 (2022): 2493.

5. Demrozi, Florenc, Ruggero Bacchin, Stefano Tamburin and Marco Cristani, et al. "Toward a wearable system for predicting freezing of gait in people affected by parkinson's disease." *IEEE J Biomed Health Inform* 24 (2019): 2444-2451.

How to cite this article: Andres, Dmitry. "Protecting Patient Information: Ethical and Legal Responsibilities of Nurses in Digital Care." *J Nurs Care* 14 (2025): 708.