“Yes,” say LHC Scholars Feliciano Yu and Thomas Houston. “However, the performance differences were small and our results were significantly weakened when we took into account other factors associated with quality care. Implementation of health information technologies (IT) among hospitals is increasing and increases the need to identify useful measures of successful IT implementation. Our study was designed to analyze “Most Wired” status which is one such measure of excellence in health IT.”

Since 1999, the American Hospital Association magazine *Hospital and Health Networks* has published an annual list of 100 institutions as health care’s “Most Wired” hospitals of the year. The list is compiled from responders to a national survey which aims “to promote the effective use of information technology in achieving clinical and operational excellence” in health care. Computerized physician order entry, electronic health records, and clinical decision support systems are examples of health care technologies that support quality improvement and improved health outcomes.

To answer their research question, the authors conducted an analysis of ten quality indicators representing cardiac and pulmonary measures for adult hospitals that participated in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Hospital Compare initiative. Performance of Most Wired hospitals versus comparison hospitals was higher on all but one quality indicator. Most Wired hospitals also tend to be not-for-profit teaching hospitals with more nurses staffing per bed than comparison institutions. These factors have been associated with quality outcomes in previous studies. After controlling for these factors, Most Wired hospitals were associated with better quality scores for only two out of ten quality indicators.

“Clearly, health care IT plays a vital role in the future of health care and has been shown to effect quality in many studies. The Most Wired designation may be a marker for quality but we doubt a causal association,” say the authors. “Future research is needed to identify useful measures of IT implementation that can independently predict quality.”

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