Critical awareness of healthcare wearables data
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INTRODUCTION

With the advent of wearable health and fitness tracking devices, the way health care will be delivered will change because of the opportunity for people and providers to more easily track and respond to even small changes in a person’s health status. Wearable devices perceive and record health information about users continuously and discreetly. The awareness of people about the distinction between the collected non-sensitive versus sensitive information has to be analyzed, which will address how comfortable people are in sharing this information when they know the risks involved. Unfortunately, health information is not considered protected health information unless it is shared with doctors, hospitals or any third-party vendors (Business Associates) of these entities. These devices are not covered under the Health Care Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and thus there can be little expectation of privacy or security as provided for under this legislation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Exploring the perception of people with respect to how the information gathered from wearable and fitness tracking devices is used and shared by vendors and third parties.
- What options might need to be provided to users by vendors or mandated by law to increase the security and privacy of this information?
- Why one vendor chose to comply with HIPAA and why other vendors are not yet following suit?

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to analyze people’s capability to mark a distinction between non-sensitive versus sensitive information collected by the wearables, which will address how comfortable people are in sharing this information when they know the risks involved.

SIGNIFICANCE

This paper is to bring to people’s attention the importance of the wearables being HIPPA complaint and for them to be a more conscious citizen knowing where exactly their health information is being used. The broader impact can be that people will take this issue more seriously which would compel the law makers to mandate rules to ensure an increase in the security and privacy of this collected information.