

## Chapter 6

# Change Resistance

### ABSTRACT

*Potential challenges to interoperable multinational electronic healthcare records include resistance to the discussion based on several reasons. This chapter discusses change resistance at the individual, group, organizational, country, and multinational levels. Recognizing the issue as resistance to change can allow the leaders to employ change resistance strategies to come to the table for a cooperative discussion about possible solutions. This chapter includes potential strategies for dealing with resistance at various levels. By employing tested change management strategies, leaders may be able to share enough information to ignite the discussion, leverage passion for a solution, and develop multinational cooperation by reducing the resistance to electronic health records interoperability.*

Interoperability strategies must consider potential reluctance to integrate electronic health records and resistance to change existing methods of sharing health information. This chapter discusses the types of resistance organizations face at various levels and in multiple contexts to explore potential strategies to deal with resistance. By reviewing how leaders deal with resistance at the individual, group, organizational, and multinational levels, we can approach the subject with an awareness of the potential challenges impacting the discussion of multinational electronic health record interoperability. In this exploration of change resistance consider how each of the levels of resistance may require a different strategy to address potential issues that complicate multinational electronic health record interoperability strategies.

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In terms of government involvement or corporate reluctance, change resistance can take many forms (Carter, S.K., 2019). For example, Parkin (2009) includes two chapters on reactions to change including both resistance and conflict. Nahavandi (2015) identified multiple causes of change resistance and discusses solutions for overcoming resistance (p.287-289). Hilary Scarlett (2019) points out the emotional reaction when change is imposed. Individuals tend to feel that they have no choice or control over the decision. Resistance to multinational interoperability of electronic health records could be caused by a feeling that information is out of control of the individual. Most textbooks covering topics related to organizational development and change management address the issue of resistance in some way (Burke, 2018; Cawsey et al., 2016; Hodges, 2021; Nahavandi, 2015; Scarlett, 2019).

## **INDIVIDUAL RESISTANCE**

We begin the discussion of resistance by looking at the individual. You might be wondering how the discussion will ever get to the multinational level if we begin with the individual. While some research may explore focusing on the group, organization, or country (Sverdlik, & Oreg, 2023), the truth is that change involves individuals following through in ideology and behavior. To accomplish this, it is critical to get buy-in from all interested parties. Consider the owner of the information in the electronic health record, the owner of the system housing the record, the location where the conversation happens to create the record, administrators making decisions about the records, legislative bodies making laws about the records, governments funding the records, and individuals looking at ways to share information so that the information may be accessed in multiple nations for all the reasons discussed in earlier chapters. The point is that each of these interested parties is an individual, so we must begin by looking at the potential for individual resistance.

Some individuals are resistant to all change, which is a condition of blind resistance as described by Burke (2018). This type of resistance to change may be an element preventing interoperability strategies from being implemented. When there is reluctance to discuss the fact that change must happen, it delays the inevitable. It isn't just the difficult person who won't accept the change that is causing the delay. It is a very real fear of the unknown that keeps some people from considering a new approach. Resistance must be overcome before

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