Report on Patient Privacy Volume 23, Number 6. June 08, 2023
Hospitals Near a Ransomware Target Also Affected; Coordination Imperative

By Jane Anderson

Hospitals located near health care delivery organizations that are affected by ransomware attacks may experience more patients and constraints in resources that affect time-sensitive care for conditions such as acute stroke, a study found.

The research, published in *JAMA Network Open*, found significant increases in emergency department waiting room times, patients leaving without being seen and patients leaving against medical advice at hospitals located near facilities that were undergoing ransomware attacks.[1]

There was also a significant increase in stroke code activations and confirmed strokes at those nearby hospitals during what the researchers termed "the attack phase" when compared with a control period that didn't include a ransomware attack, the study found.

"These findings suggest that targeted hospital cyberattacks may be associated with disruptions of health care delivery at nontargeted hospitals within a community and should be considered a regional disaster," wrote the University of California, San Diego, research team.

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