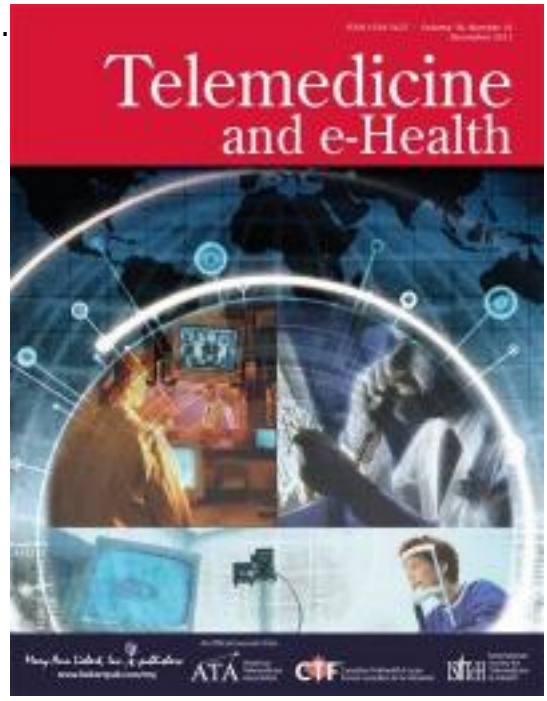
Is the US Health Care System a Target for Cyberterrorism?

The health care system in the U.S. is a $2.5 trillion industry and depends heavily on communication and the transfer of information via the Internet. This puts it at ever-increasing risk of a cyberterrorism attack, which could jeopardize lives and threaten patient care and privacy. Cyber threats are on the rise, and U.S. health care organizations must be better prepared to deal with them, according to an article published in *Telemedicine and e-Health*, a peer-reviewed journal from Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers (http://www.liebertpub.com [1]). The article is available free online on the *Telemedicine and e-Health* website (http://www.liebertpub.com/tmj [2]).



In "Cyberterrorism: Is the U.S. Healthcare System Safe?," (http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/full/10.1089/tmj.2012.0022 [3]) David Harries, MBA, MPP, Océ North America (Pembroke Pines, FL) and Peter Yellowlees, MBBS, MD, University of California, Davis (Sacramento), explore the risk of a cyber attack on health care targets in the U.S. They predict what a cyber attack might look like, proposing that it would occur in waves over a period of weeks, leaving a hospital's staff untrusting of electronic data and its IT staff "totally demoralized." The article also discusses why health care in general is a target, how the health care system is currently protecting itself from a potential cyber attack, and what it could and should do to protect itself better in the future.

"Many years ago, when we first started using the Internet for telemedicine, a colleague expressed his concern to me about our efforts," says Charles R. Doarn, MBA, Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Journal and Research Professor of Family and Community Medicine, University of Cincinnati, Ohio. "He said he had three concerns

about telemedicine on the Internet: 'Security, Security, Security.' Nearly 20 years later, the Internet and the Web are integral parts of what we do in medicine, commerce, news, entertainment, etc. We must remain vigilant, and Harries and Yellowlees do an outstanding job of bringing this to our attention."

Mary Ann Liebert, Inc./Genetic Engineering News [1]

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