

# PATIENT IDENTITY AND MATCHING



Patient matching is the practice of connecting disparate patient records across different medical providers or facilities. A patient visiting two different doctors or two different hospitals should yield the same medical record, but the data shows this does not usually happen.

Inconsistent patient matching creates a handful of problems for the patient and the provider. These errors present a considerable threat to the delivery of suitable care and patient safety and carry major consequences.

## MISMATCHED DATA RESULTS IN PATIENT HARM

Mismatched patient data and incomplete medical history can lead to potentially fatal consequences. Mismatched data could result in incorrect or unnecessary medical care.

An example would be if a patient is not matched to the correct record, a drug could be prescribed to the wrong patient. If the clinician does not know of the patient's drug history, it could result in a potentially fatal outcome.

## MISMATCHED DATA PUTS A FINANCIAL STRAIN ON HEALTH SYSTEMS

Patient safety is always a major priority, but there is also a significant cost burden on the health system if there is a patient matching error.

## POTENTIAL SOLUTION WITH SECURITY CONSEQUENCES

A common solution is a national patient identifier. An NPI is similar to a Social Security number, where a number code would be used across all providers to identify individual patients. This would replace the current system that uses a name, address, or date of birth.

