

LAY ABSTRACT

TITLE: Assessing the added value of linking electronic health records to improve the prediction of self-reported COVID-19 testing and diagnosis

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Since COVID-19 started, scientists have been trying to figure out what makes some people more likely to get sick. Most studies have looked at either online surveys or electronic health records, but not both together. Electronic health records are what doctors use to report on your health during a visit. If you do not see a doctor when you are sick, there is no electronic health record to report.

This study looked at 7,054 patients to see how well their surveys versus electronic health records help us tell whether someone took a test for or had COVID-19. The surveys found more people who had tested for or had COVID-19 than the electronic health records. This means that electronic health records may miss whether someone tested for or had COVID-19, and that survey data alone may be useful to use in studies looking at COVID-19 health outcomes.

This study tells us that electronic health records can be helpful for research, but they may not be needed if there is already good survey data. However, the researchers

suggest that studies may still need to use electronic health records when looking at certain aspects of COVID-19 cases, such as symptom severity.