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Research Findings: Strong Collaboration Between Clinical and IT Leaders Supports Better Safety and Quality

Research Conducted by



In the course of delivering care, clinical team members at hospitals and health systems increasingly interact with information technologies designed to facilitate, streamline, and document care. For these clinical IT systems to deliver on their promises, they must be designed and deployed in a way that supports rather than hinders clinical workflows and communication. To achieve optimal outcomes, these systems require a new depth and degree of collaboration between clinical leaders who understand medical and nursing care, and IT leaders who understand technical integration and security requirements.

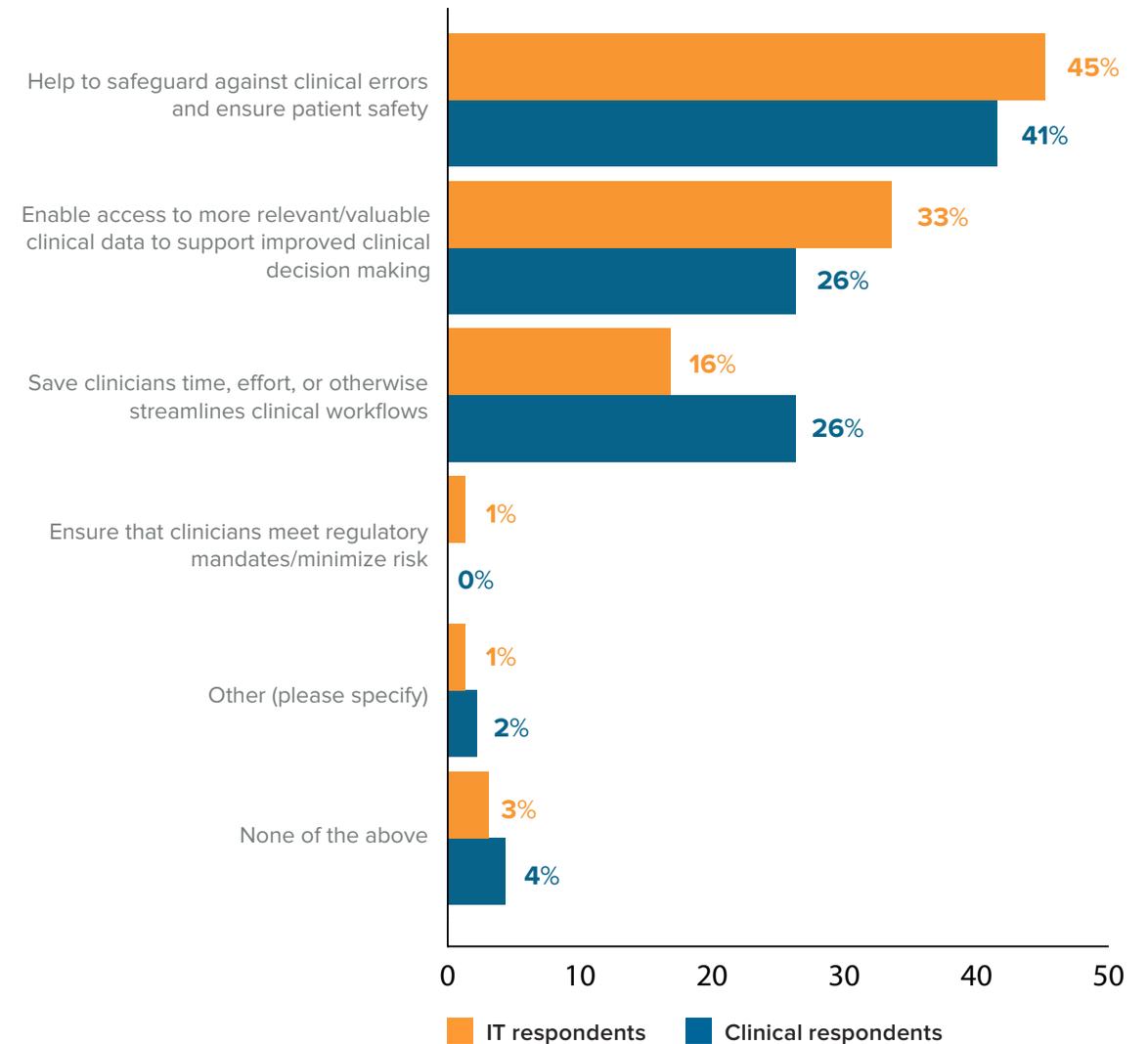
To explore how IT and clinical leaders at hospitals and health systems are collaborating to source and implement clinical IT solutions, Vocera® worked with HIMSS Analytics to survey 124 clinical and IT leaders at health systems, hospitals, and outpatient facilities. Eighty-eight percent of respondents were from hospitals with more than 100 beds, 15% from hospitals with 101-250 beds, 17% from hospitals with 251-500 beds, and 56% from hospitals with more than 501 beds. The survey was conducted before and during the HIMSS 2017 conference in Orlando, FL.

Most Important Value for a Clinical IT System to Deliver: Patient Safety

Clinical and IT leaders agree that the most important value of clinical IT systems is to help safeguard against clinical errors and ensure patient safety. But after that, opinions across the two groups diverge. Twice as many IT leaders cited access to clinical data for clinical decision support as a critical function of clinical IT solutions, and mentioned the need to for these platforms to save clinicians time and effort by streamlining clinical workflow. Clinical leaders are much more aware of the increasing workload and pressures that are burdening frontline doctors, nurses, and other care team members. For these leaders, access to data and streamlined workflows hold equal sway.

In your opinion, what is the MOST IMPORTANT value that a clinical IT system can deliver?

(Please select only one)

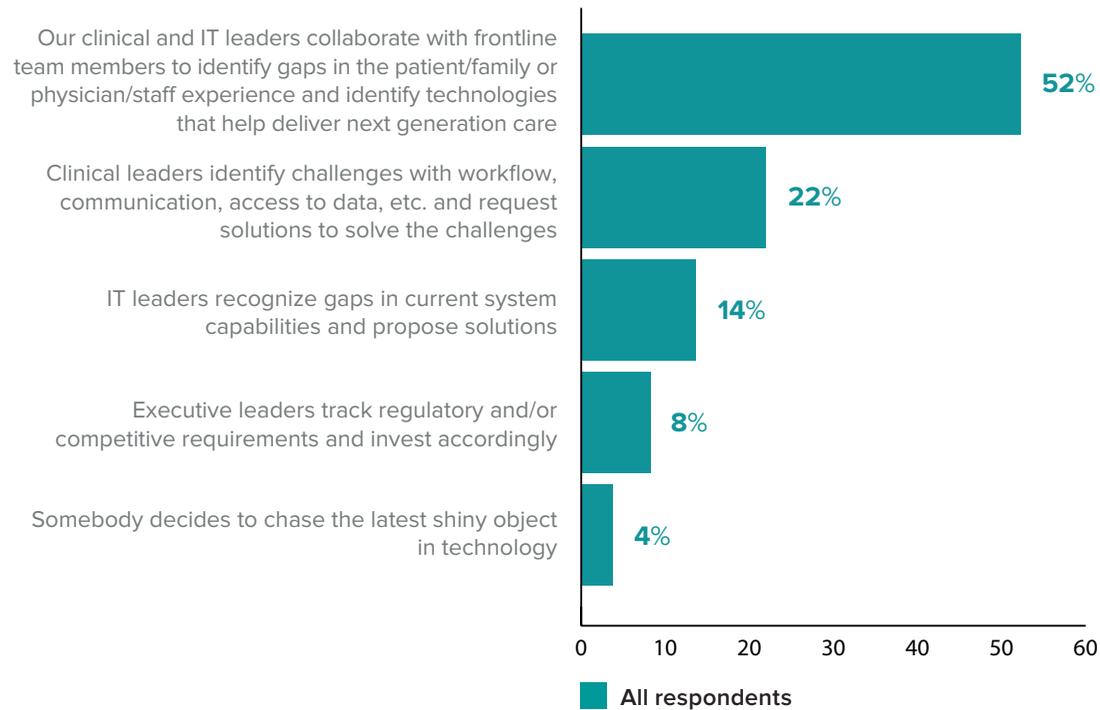


Assessing the Need: Clinical Stakeholders Prevail

Roughly half of the clinical and IT leaders surveyed report that they work together with frontline team members to identify gaps in the care experience that can be filled by clinical IT solutions. For respondents whose organizations don't take this collaborative approach, clinical leaders are more often the ones taking the lead.

Which of the following BEST describes how your organization decides that they need a new IT solution?

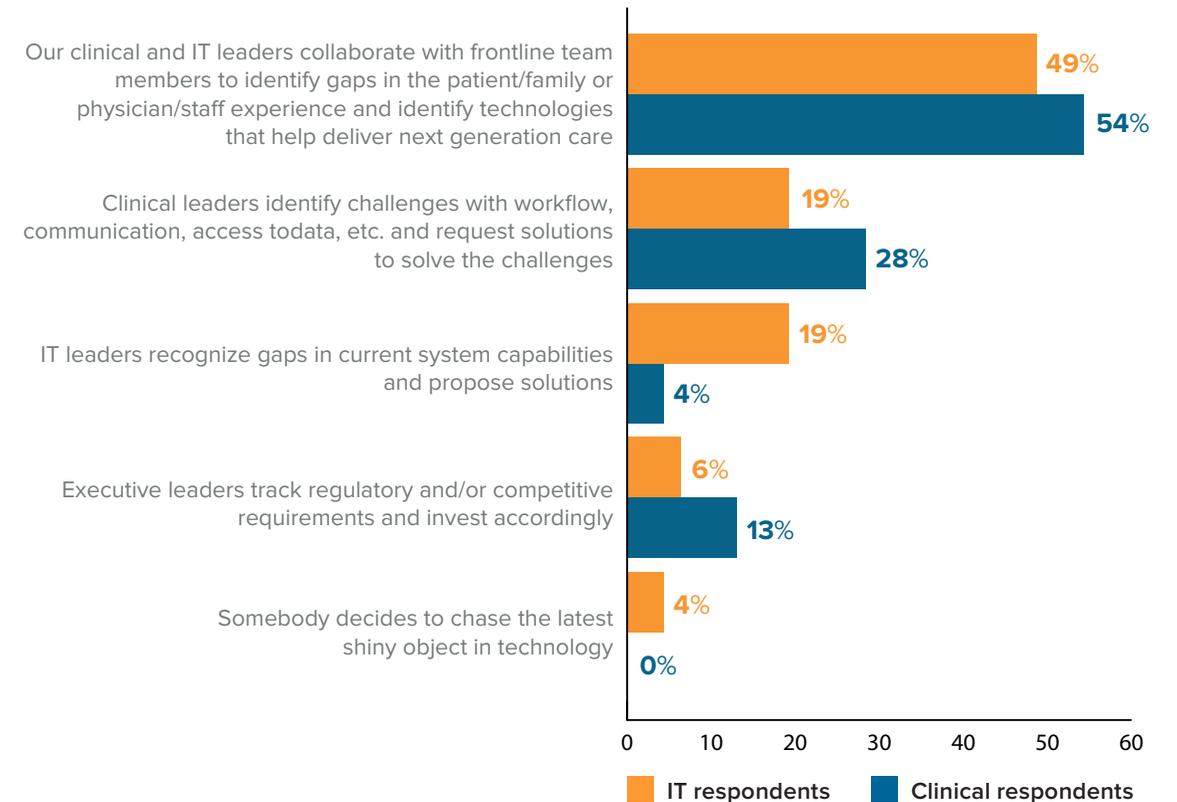
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Delving in more deeply, clinical leaders see themselves playing a much stronger role in identifying clinical IT solution needs. They are significantly less likely than their IT peers to see the role that IT leaders play in identifying new system capabilities. Clinical leaders are also far more likely to believe that regulatory requirements shape a significant portion of clinical IT solution decisions.

Which of the following BEST describes how your organization decides that they need a new IT solution?

(Please select only one)

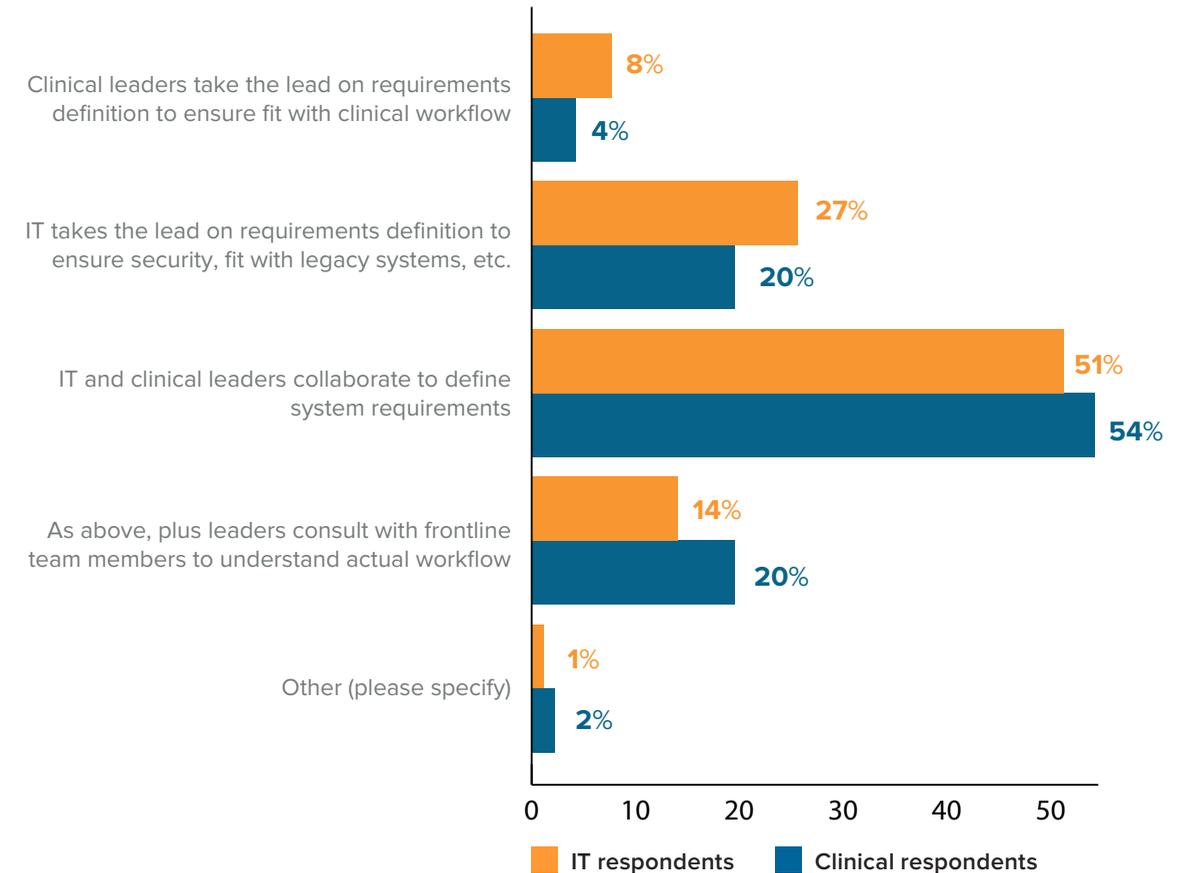


Defining System Requirements: IT and Clinical Leaders Collaborate

At more than half of organizations, IT and clinical leaders collaborate to define requirements for clinical IT solutions. Given that these systems need to meet both clinical requirements for supporting care, as well as complex integration and security requirements, this is a great start. Even better, early-adopter health systems are going beyond leader collaboration and directly consulting with frontline team members to understand actual (as opposed to supposed) workflow. Clinical leaders are more aware of this, with one in five citing this as their approach. Fewer IT leaders cited this approach, however. This suggests a potential opportunity for IT team members to shadow clinical staff to truly understand how the systems they select will be used in the real-world environment.

Which of the following BEST describes how your organization defines requirements for clinical IT system investments?

(Please select only one)



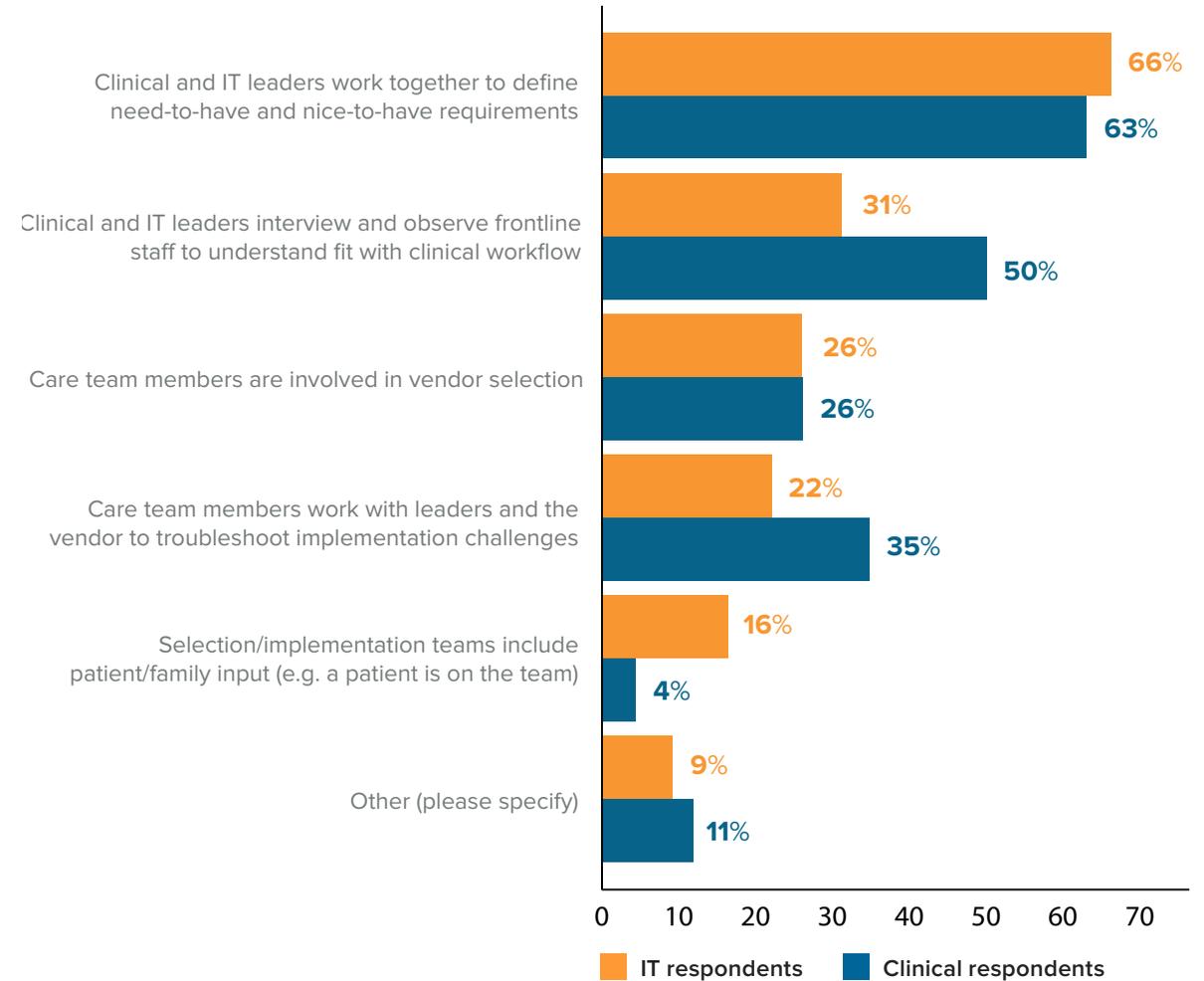
Selection and Implementation: IT and Clinical Work Together

According to respondents, collaboration between clinical and IT leaders continues after requirements definition and into the selection and implementation process. However, few respondents include care team members and patients and family members in the selection and implementation process.

As clinical IT solutions evolve to play deeper roles in communication, workflow support, data capture, and decision support at the bedside and across the care continuum, it will become more important for both clinical and IT leaders to make sure they are involving all stakeholders – care team and support team members, as well as patients and families – to ensure that systems support their varied needs.

Which, if any, of the following are **STANDARD** practices in your clinical IT selection/implementation process?

(Please select all that apply)

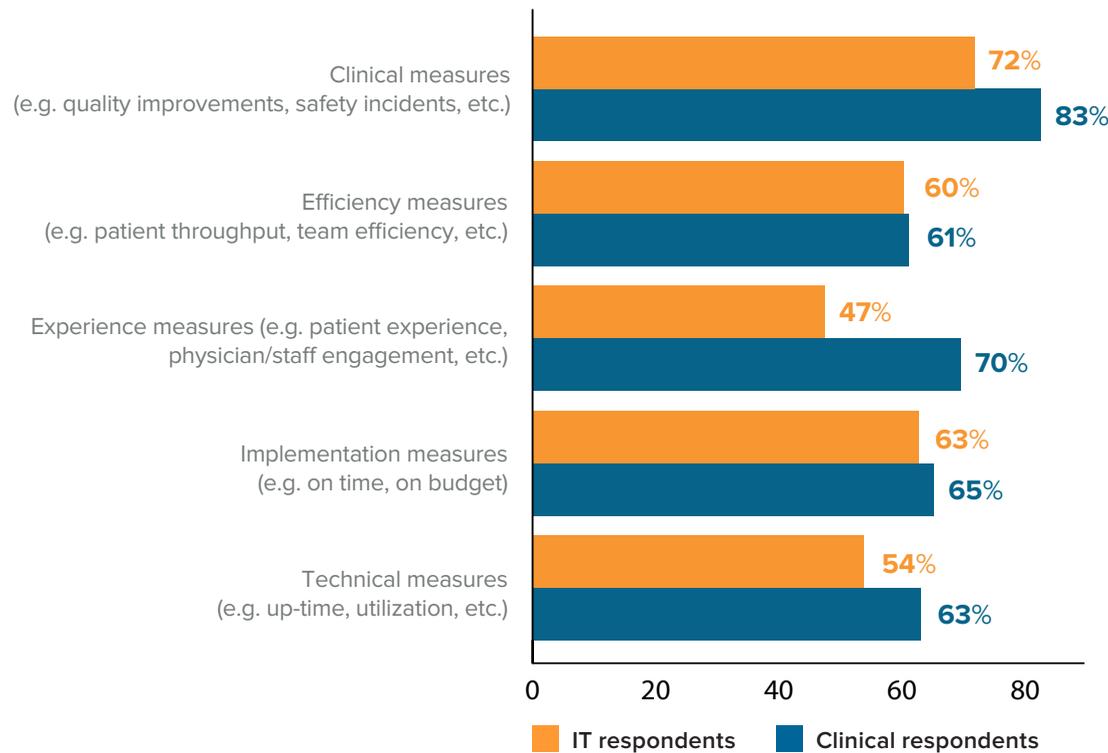


Measurement Tracks Value

Just like clinical team members, clinical IT systems have to deliver on a host of outcomes, ranging across quality, safety, efficiency, and experience. Clinical and IT leaders are focused on all of these measures, as well as technical and implementation metrics.

How do you measure the success of clinical IT solutions?

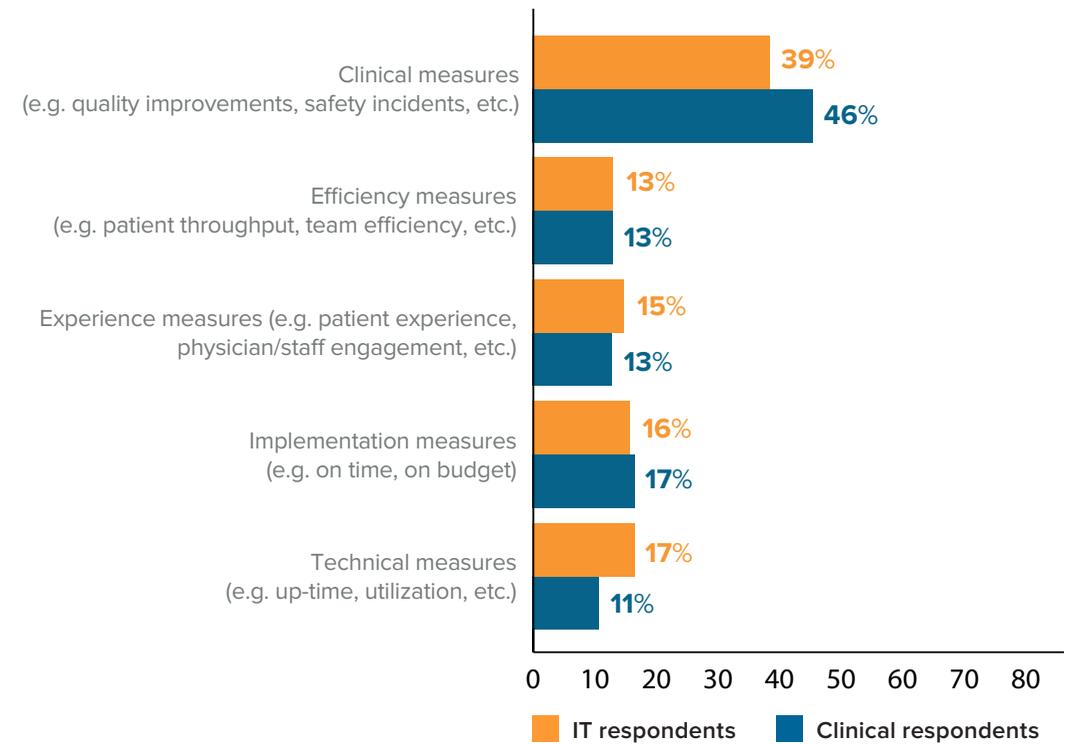
(Please select all that apply)



But clinical and IT leaders agree: the ultimate measure of clinical IT solution success is the impact solutions have on clinical measures such as quality and safety improvement.

What is your PRIMARY measure of success for clinical IT solutions?

(Please select only one)

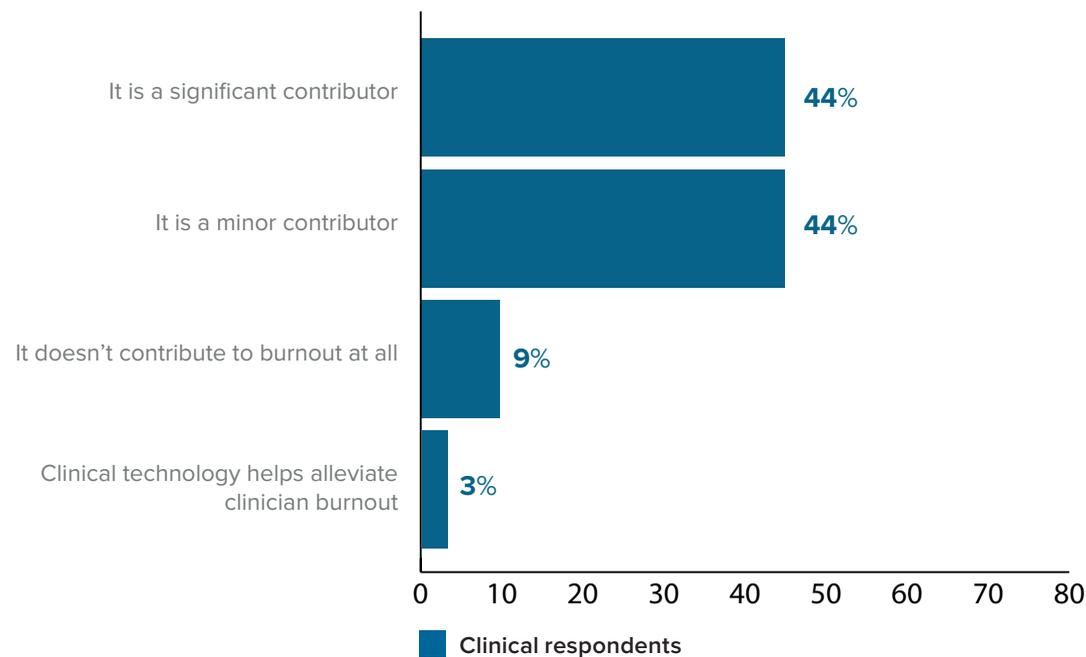


Clinicians See Collaboration and Integration as Key to Reducing Tech-Related Burnout

As demands rise on clinical team members, burnout is gaining attention as a critical issue. Some sources point to technology and related documentation requirements as a key factor in burnout. Our clinical leaders were somewhat split about clinical IT's role in causing burnout. Most acknowledge that clinical technology plays at least some role in contributing to burnout among doctors, nurses, and other care team members.

To what extent is clinical technology a contributor to burnout among doctors, nurses, and other care team members?

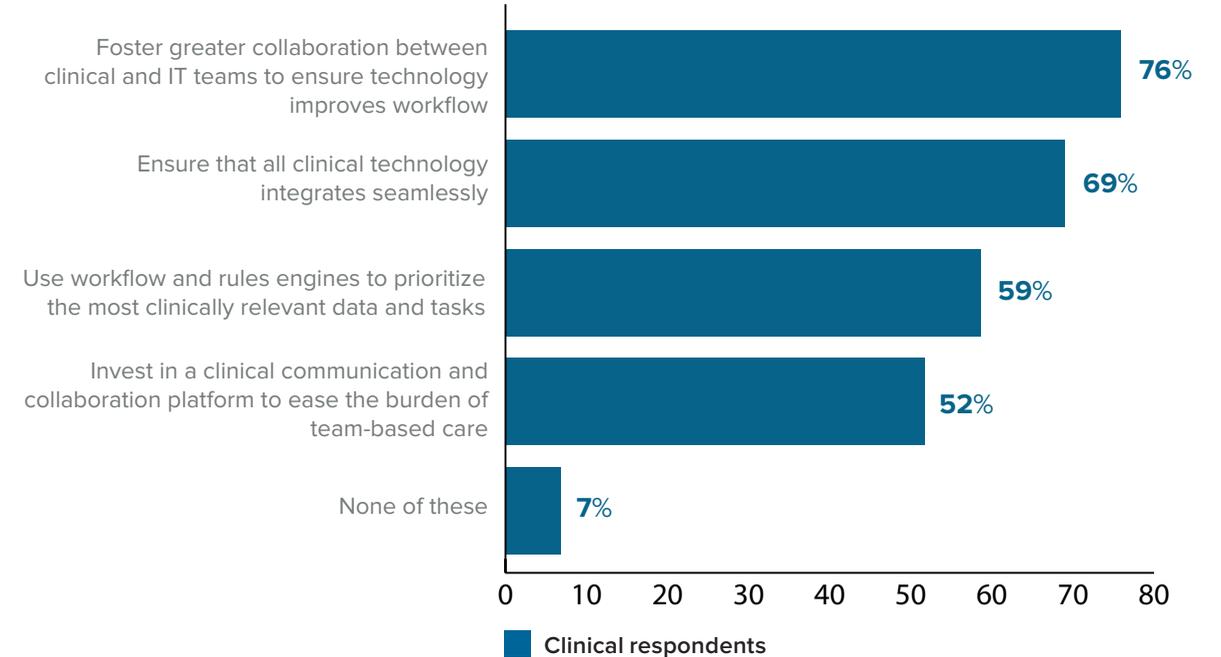
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The majority of clinical leaders believe that collaboration between IT and clinical teams to ensure clinical technology improves workflows is key to turning clinical IT into a burnout solution rather than cause. They also point to the importance of system integration to ensure IT solutions work together. More than half believe that workflow and rules engines help prioritize relevant data and tasks, and that communication and collaboration platforms help ease the burden of team-based care.

How can health systems make clinical technology a greater part of the solution to clinician burnout?

(Please select all that apply)

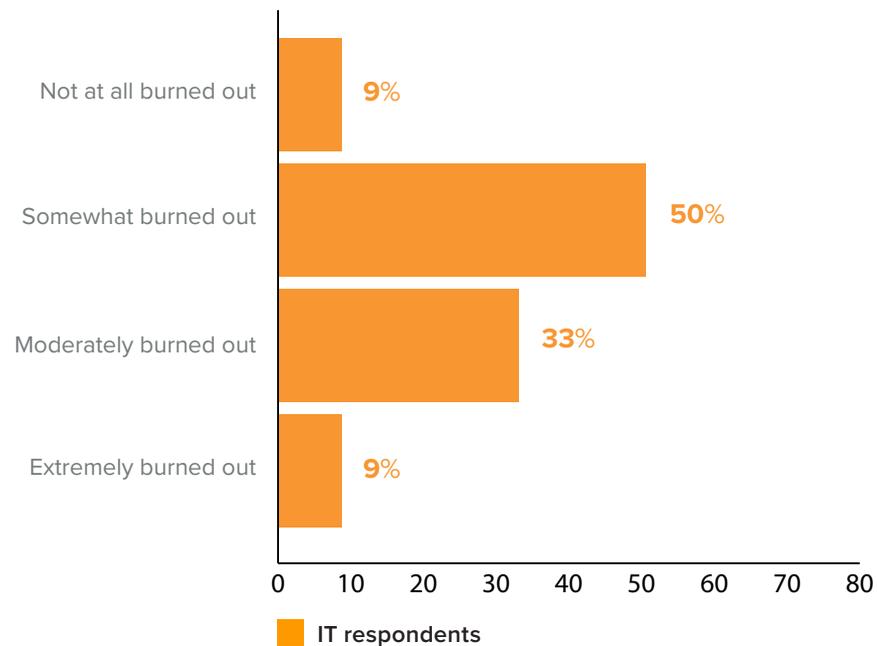


Budget and Resource Gaps Fuel IT Burnout

While much attention is paid to care team burnout, we wondered whether the pressure of supporting clinical IT solutions is affecting IT team members. Half of IT respondents reported that their teams are somewhat burned out by the demands of supporting clinical IT selection, implementation, and management. Only nine percent reported not being burned out at all, with the rest being moderately or extremely burned out.

To what degree is your IT team/IT leaders burned out by the demands of supporting clinical IT selection, implementation, and management?

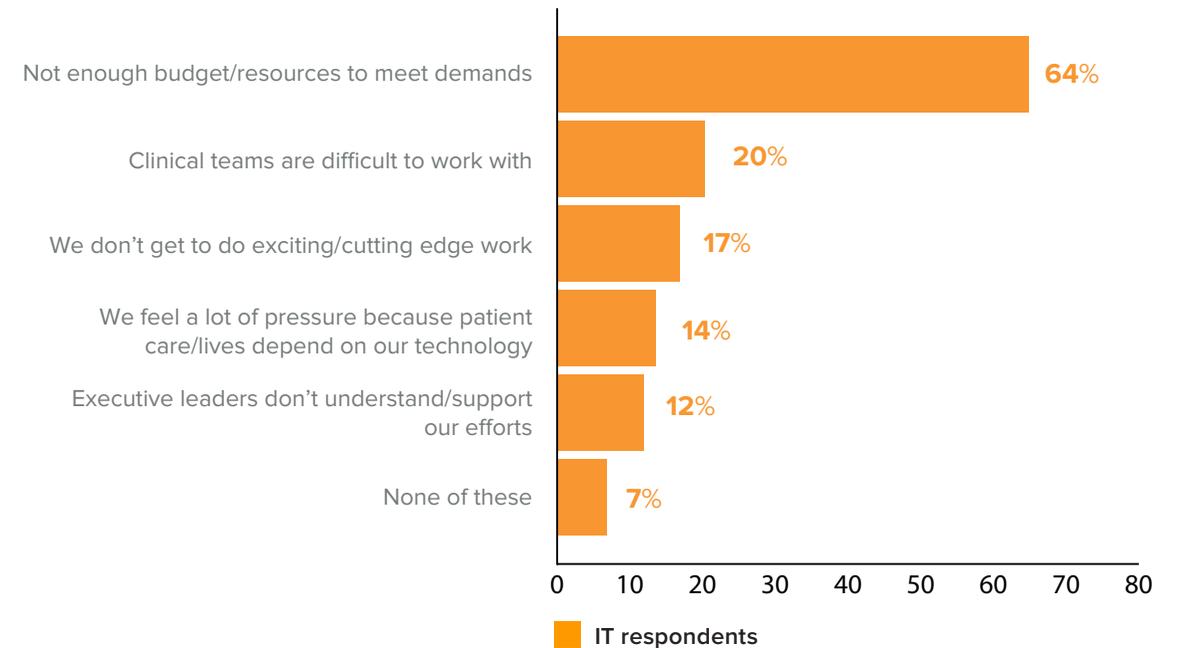
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Not surprisingly, two-thirds of IT respondents cited budget and resource restraints as the top factor contributing to burnout among their teams. Other roadblocks included difficulty working with clinical teams, lack of opportunity to do innovative work, the pressure of running IT on which lives depend, and lack of understanding or support from executive leadership.

What are the greatest contributors to burnout among your healthcare IT team and leadership?

(Please select all that apply)



Strengthen Collaboration for Better Safety and Quality

IT and clinical leaders have laid strong foundations for a collaborative approach, but they have an opportunity to go further in many areas, for example by encouraging more direct engagement between IT and frontline caregivers.

Better collaboration matters because it contributes to successful technology adoption. Successful adoption of technology for clinical collaboration and workflow depends on deeply understanding the context in which frontline caregivers work, and enabling the outcomes they expect. These outcomes include factors related to quality and safety, such as reducing adverse events and injuries, and being responsive to patients. They also include factors related to clinician satisfaction, healthcare quality, and hospital efficiency.

Burnout also has bearing on safety and quality. The results show that while burnout is a more significant issue for clinical leaders, their IT colleagues are not immune. Greater collaboration between the two groups when selecting and implementing clinical IT systems can play a key role in relieving the burden. By aligning clinical expertise around patient care and safety with IT's expertise in applying the latest tools and resources, it should be possible to create innovative solutions that satisfy the needs and ambitions of both groups while ensuring technology improves workflows, increases efficiencies, and boosts satisfaction for staff and patients.

About Vocera

The mission of Vocera is to simplify and improve the lives of healthcare professionals and patients, while enabling hospitals to enhance quality of care and operational efficiency. In 2000, when the company was founded, we began to forever change the way care teams communicate. Today, Vocera continues to offer the leading platform for clinical communication and workflow. In more than 1,400 hospitals and health systems around the world, care teams use our solutions to text securely using smartphones or make calls with our hands-free, wearable Vocera Badge. Interoperability between our platform and more than 120 clinical systems helps reduce alarm fatigue, speed up staff response times, and improve patient care, safety, and experience.

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