

Discussion

Name:

Institution:

Course Title:

Assignment Name:

Instructor:

Date:

Discussion

1. It is important to protect patients' genetic information from employers and genetic underwriters because it can be used to discriminate against patients. Therefore, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) has been legislated to make it illegal for employers and health insurance companies to obtain or use genetic information of any individual, especially for discriminating against anyone. This Federal law prevents health insurers from obtaining information which can later be used to treat any individual unfairly based on their genetic makeup, such as having a predisposition to certain illnesses. For example, if a person suffers from Huntington's disease and an employer gains access to this information while or after job recruitment, he might fire that individual based on genetic information. In job-related decisions, he might charge that person with a higher insurance premium even though the individual is currently fine which can lead to significant social and economic advantages for the individual (Zindorf, 2000).
2. One significant component of GINA law is its protection of genomic data in the area of health insurance. Through this provision, insurance providers cannot request genetic information for underwriting purposes or use genetic information to determine eligibility for health insurance. This component ensures that an individual can undergo genetic testing without any fear of his genetic makeup being used against him in obtaining health insurance which enhances patient privacy and confidentiality. The remaining concern in this provision of GINA law is that it does not extend to lifetime insurance or disability insurance which means that genetic information can still be used by providers to make decisions about premiums and coverage of the health insurance.

3. The future health implications for consumer health information include an increased risk of data breaches, technological advancements, consumer control, legal and ethical challenges, and enhanced privacy regulations. Legislations that are similar to GINA law like HIPAA may be expanded to ensure comprehensive protection of the genomic health information of the individuals. The risk of data breaches also increases with the growing use of digital tools and technologies in the healthcare sector for which companies need to implement robust security measures to protect genomic data from unauthorized use. Moreover, consumer control should also be implemented regarding obtaining genomic health information for the transparency and control of genetic information. Future legislation is also needed to prevent potential ethical and legal concerns related to data-sharing agreements.

References

Zindorf, N. E. (2000). Discrimination in the 21st Century: Protecting the Privacy of Genetic Information in Employment and Insurance. *Tulsa LJ*, 36, 703.