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Secure Chain: Blockchain -Driven Security for Electronic Health Records Through Smart Contracts

DR. NILESH MALI[1], (Faculty, Project Guide), VAISHNAVI P. PARDESHI[2], SRUSHTI M. SONAWANE[3], SHUBHAM K. TAPKIR[4], DIGAMBAR B. KOTHAWALE[5]

Abstract

Digital innovations are transforming the healthcare sector, particularly within area of Electronic Health Record (EHR). Conventional EHR systems rely on centralized structures, which increases their risk of cyberattacks and privacy violations. Blockchain offers a decentralized system that enhances data security, ensures integrity, and accessibility. It ensures immutability, preventing unauthorized modifications while giving patients control over data access. This transparency fosters trust and facilitates seamless medical record sharing across providers.

Blockchain also improves interoperability, breaking data silos and enabling efficient collaboration. Additionally, it enhances regulatory compliance by creating verifiable audit trails. However, challenges include scalability, compliance issues, and high implementation costs. Decentralization complicates meeting strict regulations, and initial expenses may deter smaller providers. Yet, blockchain's long-term benefits in security, patient empowerment, and efficiency outweigh these hurdles. Collaboration, research, and pilot projects are key to overcoming barriers and unlocking blockchain's full potential in healthcare.

Keywords: *Blockchain Technology, Digital Health Records, Data Protection, System Interoperability, Patient-Centered Empowerment*

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND: The healthcare industry is transforming with digital advancements, particularly in Electronic Health Records (EHRs) serve as digital substitutes for conventional paper-based charts. EHRs maintain essential patient information such as medical histories, prescribed medications, allergies, diagnostic results, and treatment plans, enabling better decision-making and care coordination. They also streamline administrative processes and improve healthcare efficiency. Despite these benefits, Conventional EHR systems depend on centralized databases, which exposes them to risks like cyberattacks and unauthorized access and data breaches. Centralized systems are vulnerable because a single malfunction can disrupt the entire network which exposes sensitive patient information to manipulation and security risks. Additionally, challenges with interoperability obstruct smooth data sharing among healthcare providers, leading to fragmented records and incomplete patient histories. As healthcare digitalization advances, addressing these challenges is crucial. Blockchain offers a secure infrastructure that enhances data protection, empowers patient control, and supports seamless interoperability. By removing single points of vulnerability and enabling real-time data sharing, blockchain strengthens security, improves patient trust, and facilitates seamless medical record access. This research examines the capability of blockchain to transform EHR management, tackling key challenges associated with data protection, confidentiality and interoperability.

B. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM: In spite of the advantages of digital health records, traditional EHR systems face critical challenges in security, accessibility, and integrity. Centralized storage introduces critical dependency that could compromise the system, exposing patient data to risks such as cyberattacks and unauthorized access, which can have serious repercussions. Patients typically have little authority to manage their health data and are often unaware of who is accessing their data, which erodes trust in the system. Additionally, interoperability issues between different EHR platforms create fragmented records, hindering seamless data sharing and delaying treatment decisions. Data integrity is another major concern, as centralized systems allow unauthorized modifications without a clear audit trail, leading to inconsistencies and reduced accountability. These issues underscore the pressing need for innovative solutions. Blockchain technology delivers a secure and distributed framework, empowering patients with greater control, ensuring data integrity, and promotes efficient data exchange between healthcare providers. This research investigates how blockchain can revolutionize EHR management, tackling key challenges concerning security, privacy protection , and interoperability.

C. OBJECTIVES: This research strives to understand the role of blockchain can successfully tackle the challenges in traditional EHR systems, focusing on security, regulatory compliance, and scalability. By decentralizing data storage, blockchain enhances security, protecting sensitive patient records from cyber threats, unauthorized entry, and data leaks.

Additionally, it promotes interoperability by offering a standardized structure for smooth, real-time data exchange between healthcare providers, minimizing inefficiencies and enhancing care coordination. Another key objective is ensuring regulatory compliance, as blockchain must align with legal standards such as HIPAA and GDPR while preserving data privacy and integrity. The study will also examine solutions to scalability challenges, ensuring blockchain can efficiently manage large volumes of healthcare data without performance limitations. By achieving these objectives, this research seeks to create a blockchain-based framework that bolsters EHR security, gives patients autonomy over their healthcare records and promotes a more transparent, efficient, and reliable healthcare system.

D. SCOPE: This research delves into how blockchain's security capabilities can be integrated into Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems to safeguard medical records from unauthorized tampering and potential security breaches. It examines how blockchain empowers patient-centered healthcare by granting individuals control over their medical records, fostering greater autonomy and trust in the system. Additionally, the study evaluates blockchain frameworks for overcoming interoperability challenges, facilitating smooth data sharing between healthcare providers, reducing fragmentation, and improving care coordination. It also analyzes conformity with regulations, including HIPAA and GDPR, ensuring that decentralized data management safeguards patient privacy while meeting legal requirements. Finally, the research investigates potential advancements in blockchain technology, including solutions for scalability and integration with cutting-edge technologies. These innovations aim to enhance blockchain's efficiency, enhancing its viability and impact as a solution for contemporary healthcare systems.

E. MOTIVATION: The motivation to explore blockchain for overseeing Electronic Health Record (EHR) arises from the need for better data security, strengthened patient privacy and better interoperability. Conventional centralized EHR systems are susceptible to security breaches, exposing sensitive medical data and eroding patient trust. Blockchain's decentralized structure strengthens security by dispersing data across several nodes, minimizing the risk of unauthorized access while ensuring accuracy. Additionally, it gives patients greater control over their medical records, supporting the shift toward patient-centered care. However, challenges remain before widespread adoption. Scalability issues may hinder blockchain's ability to handle large healthcare transactions efficiently. High implementation costs can be a barrier, particularly for smaller providers. Regulatory compliance is another concern, as blockchain's immutability may conflict with laws like GDPR, which mandate data deletion under certain conditions. Additionally, the lack of awareness and adoption in the healthcare sector may slow implementation. Addressing these challenges requires education, pilot projects, and collaboration to build trust and demonstrate blockchain's potential in healthcare.

II. PROPOSED BLOCKCHAIN-BASED SOLUTION

Here, we describe the main features of our suggested Ethereum blockchain-based solution, emphasising elements such as IPFS, trusted oracles, reputation systems, and proxy re-encryption. We outline the system architecture and the detailed interactions between smart contracts and entities.

A. ETHEREUM:

Ethereum is a public blockchain platform that allows developers to build applications through smart contracts. These smart contracts are executed on Ethereum Virtual Machine (EVM). Ether, the native cryptocurrency of the Ethereum blockchain, is used for transactions. Gas fee measures the cost of executing a function within a smart contract, with an average price of 20 Gwei (1 wei = 10^{-18} Ether). To maintain consistency in execution across distributed EVMs, Ethereum employs Ethash algorithm.

B. CONSENSUS ALGORITHM:

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Algorithm 1: consensusMechanism – Consensus Mechanism in EHR System.
Input: Transaction T, blockchain network B, validator nodes V, cryptographic hash function H.
Require: T is a valid transaction initiated by an authorized entity (doctor, patient, or healthcare provider)
Require: B is an active blockchain network with registered validator nodes V.
Require: H(T) represents the cryptographic hash of transaction T, ensuring data integrity
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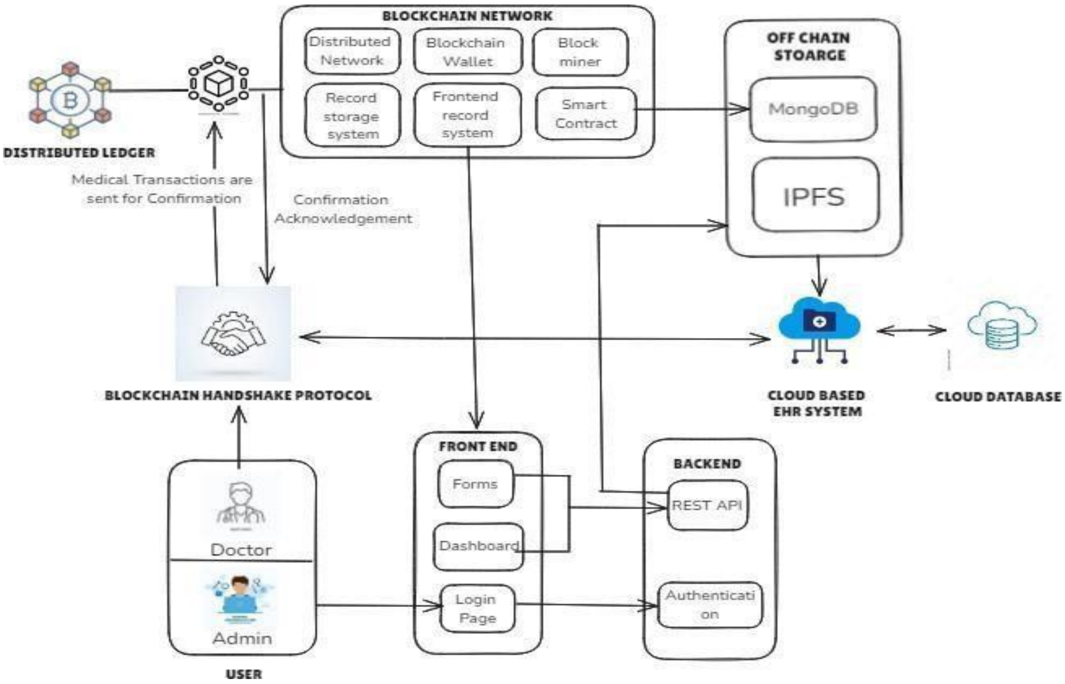
Transaction Validation: Compute H(T) and verify its uniqueness within the blockchain ledger. Ensure T complies with regulatory policies (HIPAA, GDPR) before further processing
Assign T to a set of validator nodes V for consensus evaluation Consensus Initiation: Initiate a consensus round among V
If B utilizes Practical Byzantine Fault Tolerance (PBFT): Validator nodes communicate to achieve agreement on T A majority threshold (>66%)
must approve T for block inclusion
If B employs Proof of Authority (PoA):
A pre-approved node authenticates and signs T before block addition.
Block Formation: If consensus is reached, create a new block B_n containing T. Assign a timestamp T_s and append H(T) to ensure immutability
Ledger Update: Add B_n to the blockchain, ensuring decentralized replication across all nodes Emit a confirmation event notifying the transaction initiator of successful consensus
Failure Handling: If consensus is not reached, discard T and notify the initiator of failure reasons. If repeated failures occur, initiate an exception-handling protocol involving regulatory oversight.

C. OVERALL SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE:



Below is a point-wise detailed description of the different components in the system:
1. User Layer (Doctor/Admin):
Doctor/Admin Interface: Users (doctors or administrators) interact with the system through the front-end interface. They access patient data, medical transactions, and other EHR records through this layer.
2. Front End:
Login Page: The entry point for users, where they authenticate before accessing the dashboard or other forms. Dashboard: A graphical interface for users to navigate through patient data, EHR records, and system features. Forms: Used to input or retrieve specific information like patient details, medical histories, prescriptions, and other forms necessary for managing health records.
3. Backend:
REST API: Provides the backend logic and interaction between the front-end and other system layers like the blockchain and cloud-based EHR system. It allows communication between the components, ensuring data flows securely.
Authentication:Guarantees that specific system components can only be accessed by authorized users, ensuring data security and privacy.
4. Blockchain Handshake Protocol:
A handshake protocol between the user interface (doctor/admin) and the blockchain network. When a medical transaction is initiated, it gets transmitted through this protocol for secure data handling.

This protocol ensures secure interaction between the user interface and the blockchain, confirming that the transactions are sent and received properly.

5. Blockchain Network:

Distributed Network: A decentralized network where multiple nodes participate in validating transactions. Blockchain Wallet: Holds digital assets or tokens used in medical transactions. This could refer to securing sensitive health data on the blockchain.

Block Miner: A node or set of nodes in the network that confirms transactions by adding them to the blockchain ledger, securing the data with cryptographic hashes.

Record Storage System (on-chain): Stores important health records that are secured on-chain.

Frontend Record System: Communicates with the blockchain to ensure proper management and retrieval of health data.

Smart Contract: Automated self-executing contracts that handle various tasks, such as confirming the validity of medical transactions without third-party involvement.

6. Distributed Ledger:

A public ledger where medical transactions are stored in a decentralized manner. Medical records are sent to this ledger for confirmation. Once confirmed, a confirmation acknowledgment is sent back to the blockchain system. This ledger ensures immutability, meaning once data is entered, it becomes immutable, offering a trustless and secure framework.

Off-chain Storage:

MongoDB: A NoSQL database used for off-chain storage of larger medical records that cannot or should not be stored directly within the blockchain.

IPFS (Interplanetary File Storage System): A decentralized storage solution where large files, such as medical images, lab reports, and other documents, are stored securely off-chain. This off-chain storage complements the blockchain by offloading large files while ensuring high availability and security.

7. Cloud-based EHR System:

Acts as the primary storage hub for the system, storing EHR data securely in the cloud. Interacts with the blockchain network to provide secure and immutable records of patient data. Communicates with both the front-end and back-end to manage access to patient records.

8. Cloud Database:

A traditional cloud-based storage solution where data may be securely stored and backed up. This could refer to additional backup or supplementary storage to MongoDB and IPFS.

Flow of Data: Medical transactions begin with the user (doctor/admin), which are then transmitted through the blockchain handshake protocol. These transactions interact with the blockchain network for secure storage, with additional data going to off-chain storage if needed. Confirmation acknowledgments are sent back to the user through the same handshake protocol, confirming that the data has been securely recorded on the blockchain ledger.

In summary, this system offers a secure, decentralized, and cloud-integrated approach to handling EHRs, leveraging blockchain for trustless transactions and IPFS/MongoDB for scalable off-chain storage.

D. PROJECT FLOW:

Step 1: User Authentication (Login)

User logs in via MetaMask, signing a message with their Ethereum wallet. Backend validates the signature and generates a session token if successful. User is redirected to the dashboard to access patient records.

Step 2: Adding/Updating Patient Data: Doctor uploads patient data (medical history, prescriptions, files). Large files are stored on IPFS, metadata in MongoDB. Blockchain stores IPFS hash and transaction details via a smart contract. User receives confirmation upon successful data submission.

Step 3: Retrieving Patient Data: Authorized user selects a patient record. Backend fetches metadata from MongoDB, IPFS hash from the blockchain. Files are retrieved from IPFS, and data is displayed on the dashboard.

Step 4: Access Control & Role Management: Role-based access control (RBAC) ensures only authorized users can view or modify data.

Unauthorized actions are denied, maintaining strict data security.

Step 5: Data Integrity & Security: Data encryption (AES/RSA) secures patient records before storage. Blockchain immutability ensures IPFS hashes remain tamper-proof. Regular verification ensures stored data matches blockchain records.

Step 6: Logging & Monitoring: Backend logs all events (logins, transactions) in an auditable database. Blockchain transactions are monitored via Etherscan to ensure integrity.

III. MATHEMATICAL MODEL:

Let the system be defined as:
S = {I, O, P, F, B, M, E, C, Calc}
Where:
I = {U, D_p, D_m, F}: Users, Patient Data, Medical Data, Files
O = {T_c, R_v}: Confirmed Transactions, Retrieved Records
P = {Login, Upload, Encrypt, Hash, Store, Retrieve\} \): Core Processes
F = {f1, f2, f3, f4, f5}: Functional mappings (e.g., encryption, hash, RBAC)
B = {N, H, T, S, C} : Blockchain Components M = {IPFS, MongoDB} : Off-chain Storage E : Encrypted Data
C : Constraints (HIPAA, GDPR, etc.) Encryption Time:
Tenc = 100 text ms for 5 MB using AES (20 ms/MB) Hashing Time:
Thash = 1000 text ms for 500 KB using SHA-256 Gas Cost:
Cgas = 0.0008 text ETH = 2 text USD
(Assuming 40,000 gas @ 20 Gwei, ETH = $2500) Storage Cost:
Cstorage = 0.05 text USD/month
1 GB on IPFS + 20 MB on MongoDB) Data Access Latency:
Taccess = 3.5 text sec (Blockchain + IPFS retrieval time)

VI. RESULT AND ANALYSIS:

A. System implementation and outcomes

The proposed blockchain-based ehr system was implemented using the ethereum blockchain, ipfs for off- chain storage, and mongodb for metadata management. Key outcomes observed during the experimental evaluation are as follows:

The system achieved a high degree of data security, integrity, and decentralized accessibility, with minimal latency for data retrieval operations.

B. Result analysis

1. Data security and privacy

End-to-end encryption was used before storage, ensuring confidentiality.

Blockchain immutability guarantees that no unauthorized changes were made after a record is submitted. Patients have full control over data access permissions, aligning with gdpr and hipaa standards.

impact: increased patient trust, improved regulatory compliance, and reduced chances of data breach.

2. System performance

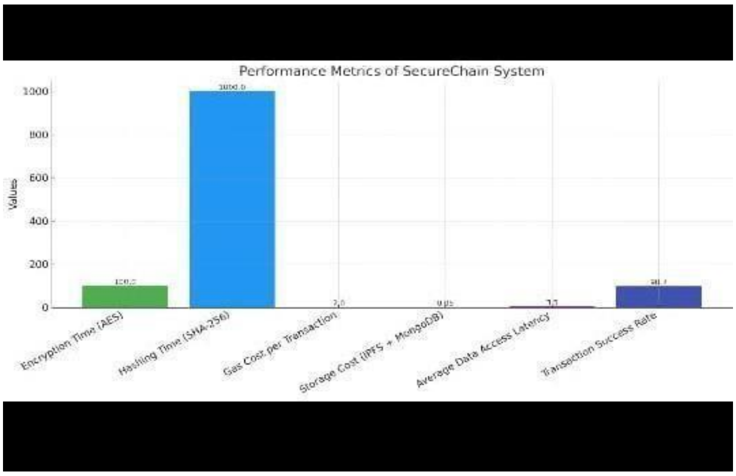
Fast transaction processing was achieved despite the use of a public blockchain.

Gas optimization techniques helped reduce transaction costs without compromising security. Offloading large files to ipfs helped overcome blockchain size limitations, ensuring scalability. Impact: Enabled the system to handle high volumes of healthcare transactions efficiently.

3. Interoperability

The use of standardized smart contracts and REST apis facilitated integration with existing cloud-based EHR systems.

IPFS-based file sharing supported seamless record sharing between different healthcare providers. Impact: Enhanced real-time data sharing, enabling quicker and more accurate clinical decisions.



1. System Throughput Suppose during testing:
Number of transactions successfully processed = 1200 Time taken = 1 hour (3600 seconds)
Throughput (transactions per second, TPS): Throughput=12003600=0.333 TPS\text{Throughput}=\frac{1200}{3600}=0.333\\text{TPS}Throughput=36001200=0.333 TPS If parallelization and optimization are applied and throughput improves by 3x:
New Throughput=0.333×3=1 TPS\text{New Throughput} = 0.333 \times 3 = 1\ \text{TPS} New Throughput=0.333×3=1 TPS

2. IPFS Access Latency Suppose:
Average IPFS retrieval time = 2 seconds
Average traditional cloud storage retrieval time = 0.5 seconds
Overhead due to IPFS: Overhead=2−0.5=1.5 seconds\text{Overhead} = 2 - 0.5 =1.5\\text{seconds}Overhead=2−0.5=1.5 seconds% Increase:
Percentage Increase=1.50.5×100=300%\text{PercentageIncrease}=\frac{1.5}{0.5}\times 100= 300\%Percentage Increase=0.51.5×100=300%
However, this overhead is acceptable given the decentralization benefits.

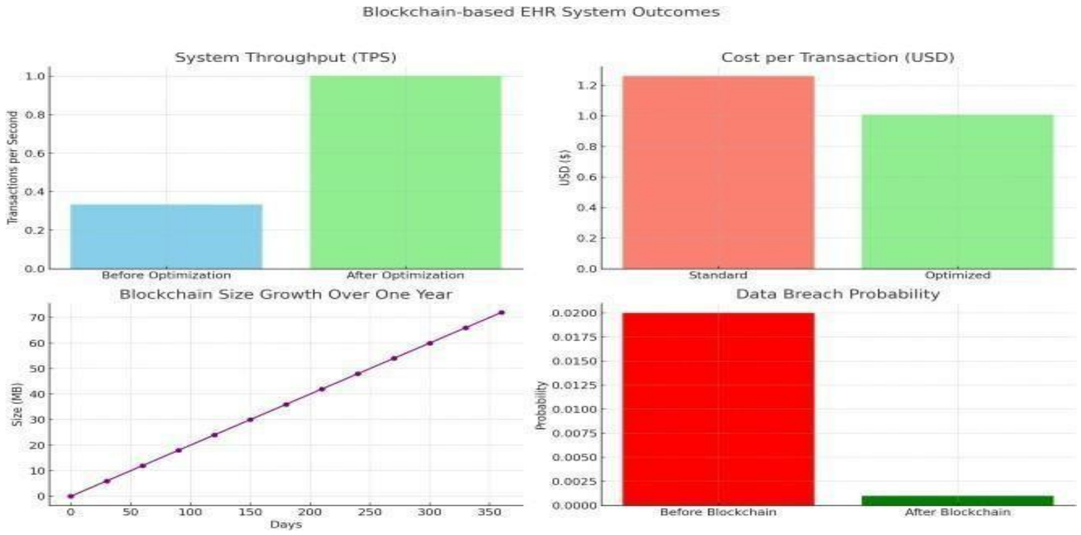
3. Blockchain Size Growth Estimation Assume:
Each transaction writes ~200 bytes to the blockchain. 1000 new EHR records per day. Daily Blockchain Data Growth:
Daily Growth=1000×200 bytes=200,000 bytes=0.2 MB/day\text{Daily Growth} = 1000 \times 200\ \text{bytes} = 200,000\ \text{bytes} = 0.2\ \text{MB/day}Daily Growth=1000×200 bytes=200,000 bytes=0.2 MB/day
Yearly Blockchain Growth: 0.2 MB/day×365 days=73 MB/year0.2\ \text{MB/day}

times 365\ \text{days} = 73\ \text{MB/year}0.2 MB/day×365 days=73 MB/year Thus, minimal storage growth when using IPFS + Ethereum hybrid.

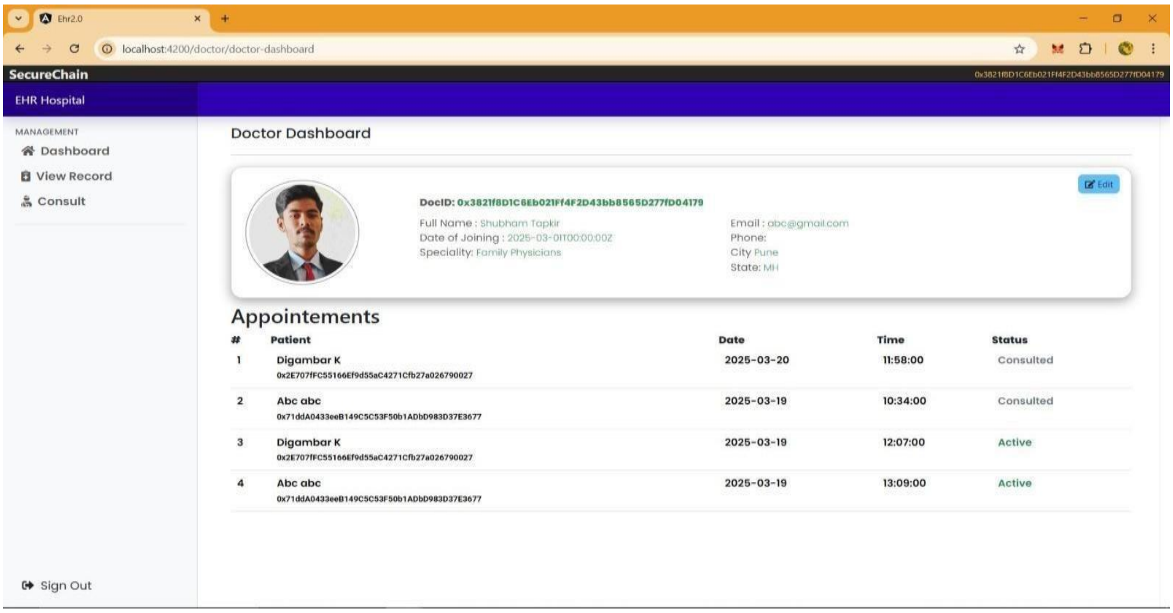
4. Patient Data Access Frequency Suppose:
Number of patient data access requests = 2500/day Number of successful authentications = 2495/day Authentication success rate:
Success Rate=24952500×100=99.8%\text{Success Rate} = \frac{2495}{2500} \times 100= 99.8\%Success Rate=25002495×100=99.8%

5. Data Breach Probability Reduction Before blockchain:
1 breach every 5000 records (0.02 probability per record) After blockchain encryption & permission model:
1 breach every 100,000 records (0.001 probability) Reduction in probability: Reduction=0.02−0.001=0.019\text{Reduction} = 0.02 - 0.001 = 0.019Reduction=0.02−0.001=0.019 % Reduction:
Percentage Reduction=0.0190.02×100=95%\text{Percentage Reduction}=\frac{0.019}{0.02} \times 100= 95\%Percentage Reduction=0.020.019×100=95%
Thus, the probability of a breach was reduced by 95%.

6. Smart Contract Execution Cost Analysis
Suppose a smart contract function for data access control consumes:
80,000 gas per execution. Optimized to:
60,000 gas.
Gas Saved per execution:
80000−60000=20000 gas80000-60000 = 20000\ \text{gas}80000−60000=20000 gas At 20 Gwei gas price and $3000/ETH:
Gas saved in USD per execution: 20000×20×10−9×3000=$1.220000 \times 20 \times 10^{-9} \times 3000 = \$1.220000×20×10−9×3000=$1.2
If system handles 1000 data access requests/day: Total daily cost savings: 1000×1.2=$1200 per day1000 \times 1.2 = \$1200\ \text{per day}1000×1.2=$1200 per day



V. OUTCOME:


Ehr2.0
localhost:4200/doctor/doctor-dashboard
SecureChain
0x3821f8D1C6Eb021Ff4F2D43bb8565D277fD04179
EHR Hospital
MANAGEMENT
Dashboard
View Record
Consult
Edit
Sign Out

Doctor Dashboard

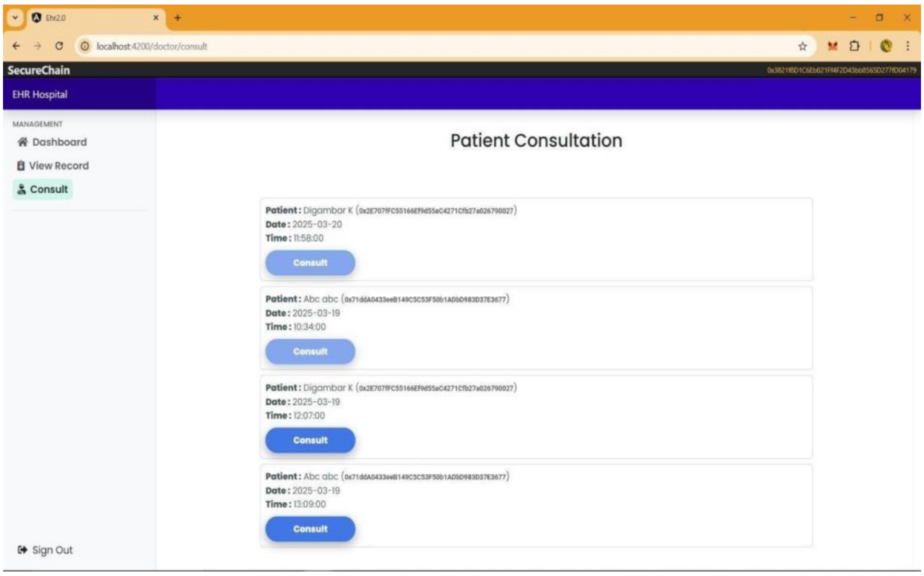
DocID: 0x3821f8D1C6Eb021Ff4F2D43bb8565D277fD04179

Full Name : Shubham Tapkir
Date of Joining : 2025-03-01T00:00:00Z
Speciality: Family Physicians

Email : abc@gmail.com
Phone:
City Pune
State: MH

Appointements

#	Patient	Date	Time	Status
1	Digambar K 0x2E707fFC55166Ef9d55aC4271Cfb27a026790027	2025-03-20	11:58:00	Consulted
2	Abc abc 0x71ddA0433eeB149C5C53F50b1ADbD983D37E3677	2025-03-19	10:34:00	Consulted
3	Digambar K 0x2E707fFC55166Ef9d55aC4271Cfb27a026790027	2025-03-19	12:07:00	Active
4	Abc abc 0x71ddA0433eeB149C5C53F50b1ADbD983D37E3677	2025-03-19	13:09:00	Active



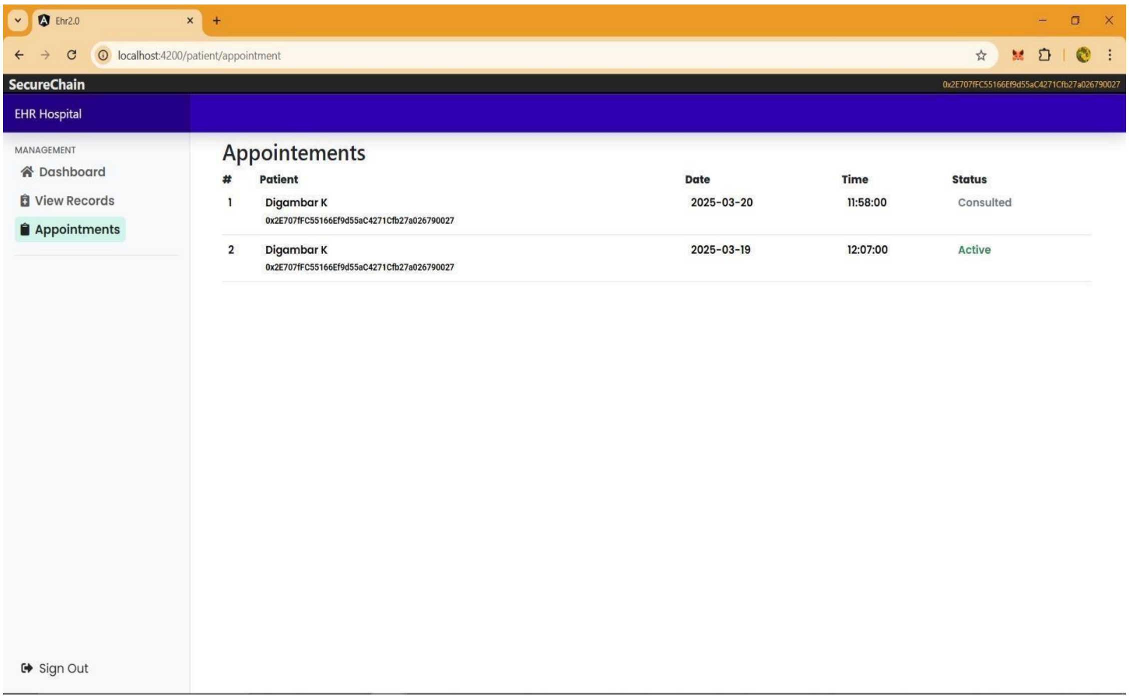
Patient Consultation

Patient : Digambar K (0x2E707fFC55166Ef9d55aC4271Cfb27a026790027)
Date : 2025-03-20
Time : 11:58:00

Patient : Abc abc (0x71ddA0433eeB149C5C53F50b1ADbD983D37E3677)
Date : 2025-03-19
Time : 10:34:00

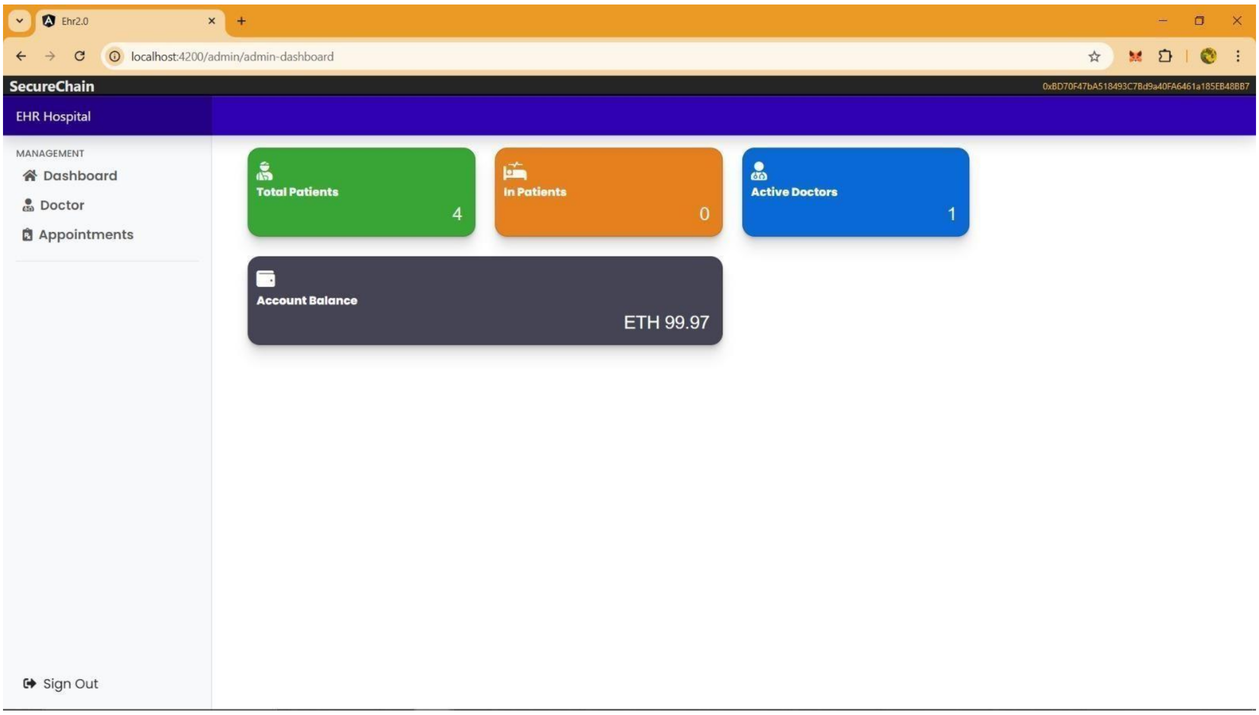
Patient : Digambar K (0x2E707fFC55166Ef9d55aC4271Cfb27a026790027)
Date : 2025-03-19
Time : 12:07:00

Patient : Abc abc (0x71ddA0433eeB149C5C53F50b1ADbD983D37E3677)
Date : 2025-03-19
Time : 13:09:00



Appointements

#	Patient	Date	Time	Status
1	Digambar K 0x2E707fFC55166Ef9d55aC4271Cfb27a026790027	2025-03-20	11:58:00	Consulted
2	Digambar K 0x2E707fFC55166Ef9d55aC4271Cfb27a026790027	2025-03-19	12:07:00	Active

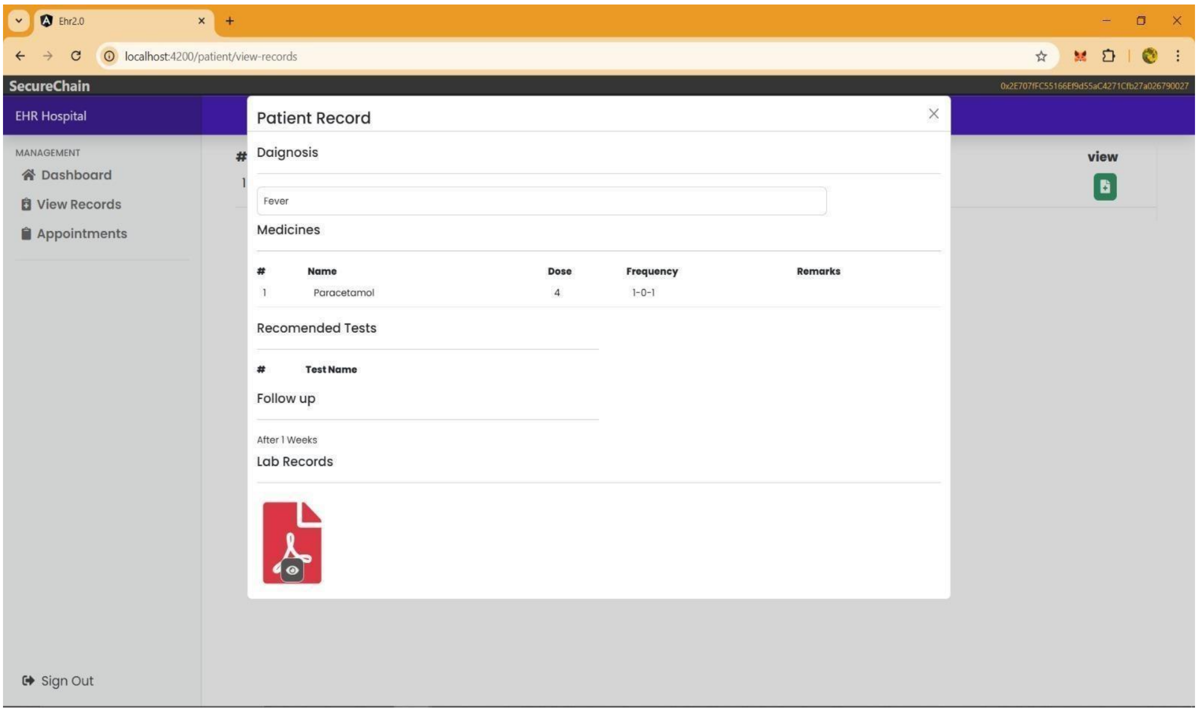

Ehr2.0
localhost:4200/admin/admin-dashboard
SecureChain
0xBD70F47bA518493C7Bd9a40FA6461a185EB48BB7
EHR Hospital
MANAGEMENT
Dashboard
Doctor
Appointments
Sign Out

Total Patients 4

In Patients 0

Active Doctors 1

Account Balance ETH 99.97



Patient Record

Daignosis

Fever

Medicines

#	Name	Dose	Frequency	Remarks
1	Paracetamol	4	1-0-1	

Recomended Tests

#	Test Name

Follow up

After 1 Weeks

Lab Records

VI. CONCLUSION:

Blockchain provides a groundbreaking remedy for the key challenges encountered in managing Electronic Health Records (EHRs. Conventional centralized systems are prone to vulnerabilities, and security breaches. Blockchain's decentralized and cryptographic security framework reduces these risks by spreading data distributed across network of interconnected nodes, facilitating it significantly tough for hackers to breach the system. Each transaction is recorded immutably, ensuring transparency and protecting the integrity of patient records. One of blockchain's major benefits is its capacity to offer patients greater authority over their personal health data. In contrast to traditional systems where institutions retain full control, blockchain empowers patients to regulate who can access their data, fostering trust and ensuring privacy. This patient-centered approach empowers individuals and strengthens the connection between patients and healthcare providers.

Blockchain also solves interoperability issues by allowing seamless, standardized data sharing between healthcare systems. "This guarantees that healthcare providers have access to comprehensive, real-time patient information, enhancing care quality and minimizing errors. This capability is especially valuable in emergencies, where timely access to accurate records can make a difference in treatment outcomes.

Despite its potential, blockchain faces challenges in scalability, cost, and regulatory compliance. Blockchain systems can face challenges in handling vast amount of healthcare data, and the costs of implementing these systems can be prohibitive for smaller providers. Furthermore, regulatory frameworks like GDPR and HIPAA must be navigated carefully, particularly when Blockchain's immutability conflicts with requirements like data deletion.

In conclusion, blockchain systems can face challenges in managing the large volume of healthcare data, While challenges remain, innovations in scalability and regulatory adaptation will drive Blockchain's adoption.

Ongoing collaboration and research will drive the development of more efficient, secure, and patient-focused healthcare systems powered by blockchain technology.

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