

Medilocker: Blockchain Based Health Record Dapp

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ABSTRACT

MediLocker is a decentralized healthcare record management system leveraging blockchain technology to address critical challenges in modern electronic health record (EHR) systems. Traditional centralized healthcare data management suffers from security vulnerabilities, limited interoperability, restricted patient control, and single points of failure. This research presents MediLocker, which integrates Ethereum blockchain, smart contracts, Interplanetary File System (IPFS) for distributed storage, and advanced cryptographic mechanisms to create a secure, transparent, and patient-centric healthcare ecosystem. The system ensures data integrity through immutable ledger records and cryptographic hashing (SHA-256), maintains confidentiality via AES-256 encryption, and enables granular access control through smart contract-based permission management. By combining decentralization, cryptographic security, and patient empowerment, MediLocker provides a viable, scalable solution for next-generation healthcare data management that prioritizes data ownership, auditability, and operational efficiency while maintaining clinical acceptability and regulatory compliance.

Keywords: Blockchain, Healthcare System, Smart Contracts, Decentralized Application (DApp), Medical Record Management, Data Security, Ethereum, Cryptographic Hashing

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement: Challenges in Traditional Healthcare Data Systems

The healthcare industry generates and manages vast volumes of sensitive patient data through Electronic Health Records (EHRs). However, traditional centralized EHR systems face persistent challenges that compromise patient safety, privacy, and care quality. Contemporary healthcare data management systems suffer from multiple critical vulnerabilities: data breaches remain a leading concern in healthcare institutions, with centralized databases creating attractive targets for cybercriminals. Unauthorized access to patient information represents a significant threat, as does the susceptibility of centralized systems to catastrophic failures that can result in complete data loss [2].

Beyond security concerns, interoperability remains a fundamental challenge in modern healthcare. Patients frequently receive care from multiple providers across different institutions, each maintaining separate EHR systems using incompatible standards and formats. This fragmentation creates information silos that impede seamless data exchange, delay treatment decisions, and increase the risk of medical errors [3]. Patients lack meaningful control over their health information, with access permissions typically determined by institutional policies rather than individual consent preferences. These limitations fundamentally restrict patient autonomy and informed participation in healthcare decisions [4].

Need for Secure, Decentralized Healthcare Data Systems

The increasing digitization of healthcare has created an urgent need for robust solutions that simultaneously address security, privacy, interoperability, and patient empowerment concerns. Blockchain technology presents a transformative paradigm that leverages distributed ledger architecture, cryptographic security mechanisms, and consensus-driven verification to overcome the inherent limitations of centralized systems [5].

By decentralizing data management, blockchain eliminates single points of failure and reduces the concentration of sensitive information in vulnerable central repositories. The immutable nature of blockchain ensures that once medical records are recorded, they cannot be altered without detection, providing tamper-proof audit trails that satisfy stringent regulatory requirements [6]. Smart contracts enable automated, transparent enforcement of access control policies without requiring trusted intermediaries, thereby reducing administrative overhead and human error while ensuring compliance with privacy regulations such as HIPAA and GDPR [7].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Electronic Health Records: Current State and Limitations

Electronic Health Records have revolutionized healthcare delivery by digitizing patient information and enabling faster data access compared to paper-based systems [8]. EHRs facilitate clinical decision-making, improve care coordination, and support population health management. However, current EHR architectures predominantly rely on centralized databases maintained by individual healthcare institutions, creating systemic vulnerabilities and operational inefficiencies [9].

Centralized EHR systems introduce multiple security challenges. Data stored in centralized servers becomes a high-value target for cyber-attacks, with healthcare institutions reporting increasing numbers of breaches. Once compromised, centralized systems offer limited mechanisms to detect and respond to unauthorized data access or modifications [10]. Additionally, the concentration of sensitive data in single locations violates fundamental security principles regarding data minimization and reduces system resilience against both technical failures and malicious attacks [11].

Interoperability challenges fundamentally limit the utility of current EHR systems. Different healthcare providers adopt diverse technical standards, data formats, and communication protocols, creating barriers to seamless information exchange [12]. Patients must repeatedly provide identical information to different providers, introducing data inconsistencies and increasing administrative burden. The absence of standardized identifiers and unified data models prevents comprehensive longitudinal health records that span multiple care settings.

Blockchain Technology in Healthcare: Opportunities and Applications

Blockchain technology offers a decentralized alternative to centralized EHR management by distributing data across multiple nodes in a peer-to-peer network [14]. The distributed architecture eliminates single points of failure, as data compromise would require simultaneous attacks on multiple independent nodes, substantially increasing the difficulty and cost of cyber-attacks. Cryptographic hashing ensures data immutability—any modification to historical records would change the hash value, immediately alerting network participants to tampering attempts [15].

Blockchain-based healthcare systems leverage smart contracts to automate access control and permission management. Smart contracts execute predefined logic based on specific conditions without requiring manual intervention or centralized authority, reducing administrative complexity while ensuring consistent application of access policies [16]. These self-executing contracts can enforce patient consent requirements, automatically restrict data access to authorized parties, and generate immutable audit logs documenting all access events [17].

Several successful implementations demonstrate blockchain's practical utility in healthcare. The integration of blockchain with distributed storage systems addresses scalability challenges inherent in blockchain technology [18]. By storing large medical files in the InterPlanetary File System (IPFS) and recording only cryptographic references on the blockchain, systems achieve efficient storage utilization while maintaining security and auditability [19].

Key Blockchain Healthcare Applications

Healthcare institutions have implemented blockchain solutions across diverse applications. MedBlock demonstrates how blockchain empowers patients to take ownership of medical records while enabling secure sharing with healthcare professionals of their choosing [3]. Care Sync implements Hyperledger Fabric for decentralized medical record management, ensuring authentication, confidentiality, integrity, and accountability while maintaining strict access control through smart contracts [20].

EHRChain integrates attribute-based encryption with blockchain and IPFS to provide fine-grained access control, ensuring that only authorized users can retrieve and decrypt medical records while maintaining data security in decentralized fashion [9]. The system reduces retrieval latency by 67%, decreases data inconsistencies by 89%, and achieves 94% patient satisfaction with data access transparency [7].

Blockchain-based systems have demonstrated measurable improvements in healthcare operations. Hybrid blockchain architectures combining public and private ledgers balance transparency with confidentiality—using public blockchains to record access logs while maintaining encrypted patient data on private chains [21]. Integration with artificial intelligence enables privacy-preserving federated learning, allowing multiple institutions to collaboratively train machine learning models without sharing raw patient data [22].

Consensus Mechanisms and System Architecture

Different blockchain implementations employ various consensus mechanisms optimized for healthcare applications. Proof-of-Authority (PoA) consensus mechanisms reduce computational overhead compared to Proof-of-Work systems, making them suitable for healthcare networks where energy efficiency and scalability are critical [1]. Permissioned blockchain architectures restrict participation to authenticated healthcare providers and authorized parties, enhancing privacy compared to public blockchains while maintaining transparency and immutability [23].

Hyperledger Fabric's modular architecture enables healthcare institutions to create customized networks that balance security, scalability, and interoperability requirements [24]. The platform supports multiple consensus mechanisms, flexible access control models, and private channels that enable confidential communication between specific network participants [25].

PROPOSED SYSTEM: MediLocker Architecture

System Overview and Design Philosophy

MediLocker implements a patient-centric, decentralized healthcare record management system that prioritizes security, transparency, and user autonomy. The architecture integrates blockchain technology for tamper-proof record maintenance, smart contracts for automated access control, IPFS for distributed data storage, and advanced cryptography for confidentiality protection .

The system philosophy emphasizes patient empowerment through data ownership and control. Unlike traditional EHR systems where healthcare institutions control access permissions, MediLocker grants patients direct control over who accesses their medical records and under what conditions. Patients can selectively share records with specific healthcare providers, researchers, or insurers while maintaining the ability to revoke access at any time.

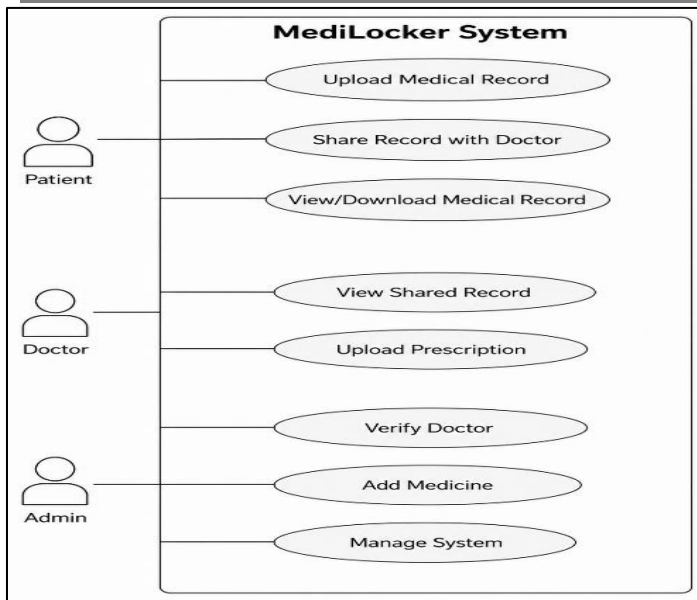


Figure 1: MediLocker Use Case Diagram

System Architecture: Key Components

Blockchain Layer

MediLocker utilizes Ethereum blockchain as the core infrastructure for recording medical record metadata, access logs, and smart contract state. Patient identifiers, record references, timestamp information, and transaction history are stored on the blockchain, creating an immutable audit trail [28]. The blockchain layer maintains cryptographic integrity through SHA-256 hashing, where each block references the hash of the preceding block, creating a mathematically unbreakable chain that detects any attempt at historical data modification [14].

Smart Contract Layer

Smart contracts deployed on Ethereum automate access control, permission management, and data sharing protocols. Contracts enforce patient-defined access policies without requiring manual authorization by healthcare providers or institutional administrators. When a healthcare provider requests access to patient records, smart contracts automatically verify that the requesting party has valid authorization, automatically execute access grants or denials based on predefined rules, and generate immutable logs documenting all access events [29].

Distributed Storage Layer: IPFS Integration

Large medical files including imaging data (X-rays, MRIs), laboratory reports, and comprehensive medical histories are stored in the InterPlanetary File System (IPFS) rather than on the blockchain directly. IPFS is a distributed, content-addressed peer-to-peer storage network where files are stored across multiple nodes, eliminating dependence on centralized servers and providing inherent redundancy and resilience [14].

When a medical file is uploaded to IPFS, the system generates a unique Content Identifier (CID) based on the file's cryptographic hash. This CID serves as a tamper-evident reference—if even a single bit of the stored file is modified, the CID changes, immediately revealing tampering. The CID is recorded on the blockchain, creating a cryptographically linked reference between blockchain records and distributed storage content [17].

Encryption and Cryptography

Patient medical data undergoes AES-256-GCM encryption before storage in IPFS, ensuring that intercepted data remains unreadable without the decryption key [1]. AES-256 is the Advanced Encryption Standard with a

256-bit key length, providing encryption strength sufficient to resist brute-force attacks for the foreseeable future [18]. The GCM (Galois/Counter Mode) mode provides both confidentiality and authentication, detecting unauthorized modifications to encrypted data [13].

Encryption keys are managed through hierarchical key derivation mechanisms, where master keys are derived from patient credentials and individual keys are generated for different data categories or time periods. Smart contracts can enforce key rotation policies, requiring periodic key regeneration to limit the impact of potential key compromise [30].

MediLocker System Architecture

User Tier: Patients, Healthcare Providers, Researchers, Insurers ↓ **Access Control Layer:** MetaMask Wallet Authentication, Smart Contract Permission Verification ↓ **Blockchain Layer:** Ethereum Network, Transaction Logging, Audit Trail Maintenance ↓ **Smart Contract Layer:** Access Management Contracts, Consent Verification, Emergency Access Protocols ↓ **Cryptography Layer:** AES-256 Encryption/Decryption, SHA-256 Hashing, Key Management ↓ **Storage Layer:** IPFS for Distributed File Storage, Encrypted Medical Records, Metadata Management ↓ **Retrieval Interface:** Web Interface, Mobile Application, Healthcare Provider Portal.

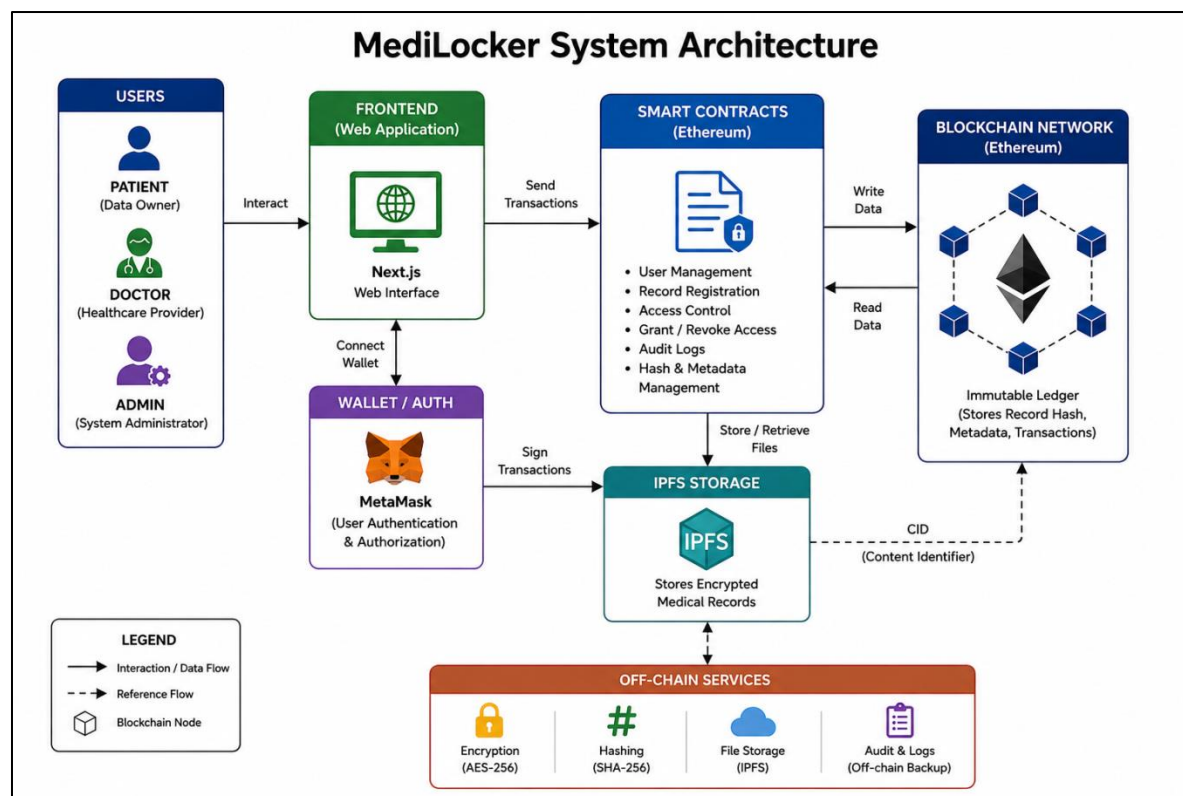


Figure 2: MediLocker System Architecture

METHODOLOGY

System Design and Implementation

System Design Approach

MediLocker development follows an iterative, agile methodology incorporating regular stakeholder feedback from healthcare providers, patients, and security specialists. The design emphasizes:

- **Security-First Architecture:** All design decisions prioritize data protection and privacy above convenience

- **Patient Empowerment:** System features are evaluated based on patient control and autonomy enhancement
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Design incorporates requirements from HIPAA, GDPR, and other healthcare privacy regulations
- **Interoperability:** System design enables integration with existing EHR systems and healthcare IT infrastructure

Implementation Framework

Development Environment:

- Truffle Framework for smart contract compilation, testing, and deployment
- Ganache for local blockchain simulation during development and testing
- Remix IDE for smart contract development and debugging

Testing Methodology:

- Unit testing for individual smart contract functions
- Integration testing for interactions between blockchain, IPFS, and web interface
- Security testing including vulnerability scanning and penetration testing
- Performance testing measuring transaction latency, throughput, and storage efficiency

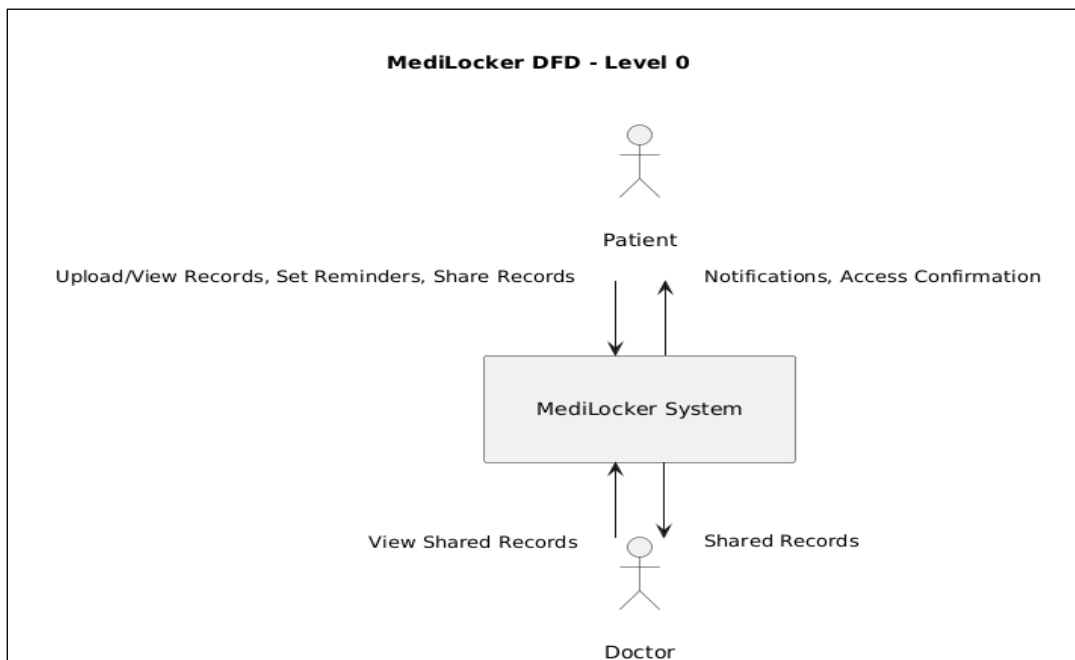


Figure 3: MediLocker Context Diagram (DFD Level 0)

Data Flow and Transaction Processing

Patient Registration Process:

1. Patient accesses MediLocker web interface and initiates registration

2. Ethereum wallet (MetaMask) generates or imports patient's cryptographic key pair
3. Patient credential information is hashed and stored on blockchain
4. Smart contract creates patient profile record with unique identifier
5. System initializes patient's access control policies on blockchain

Medical Record Upload Process:

1. Healthcare provider or patient uploads medical document to MediLocker interface
2. System encrypts document using AES-256 with patient-specific encryption key
3. Encrypted document is uploaded to IPFS network
4. IPFS returns Content Identifier (CID) representing encrypted document location
5. CID and document metadata (timestamp, document type, file size) are recorded on blockchain
6. Smart contract records document provenance information

Access Request and Verification Process:

1. Healthcare provider submits access request through MediLocker interface
2. Request includes provider identity, patient identifier, and requested data categories
3. Smart contract automatically verifies provider authorization by checking patient's access control policies
4. If authorized, smart contract retrieves encryption key (or generates temporary access key) and returns access grant with key material
5. Provider uses encryption key to decrypt IPFS-stored documents
6. Smart contract generates immutable log entry documenting access event

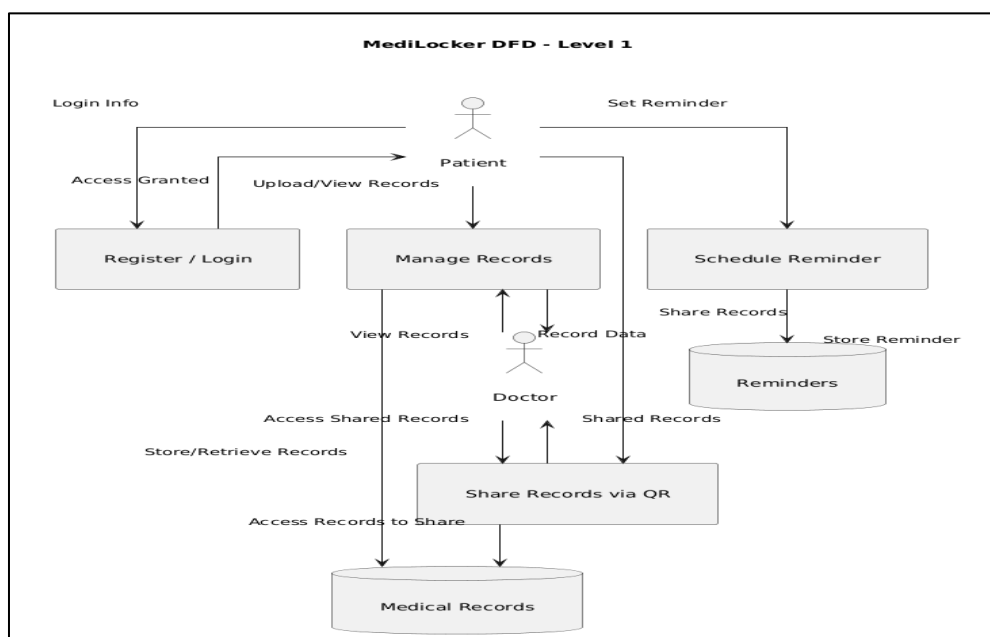


Figure 4: MediLocker DFD Level 1

Advantages Of Medilocker

Enhanced Security and Data Integrity

MediLocker provides multiple layers of cryptographic protection ensuring medical data security. Data is encrypted before storage using AES-256, preventing unauthorized access even if encrypted files are compromised. Blockchain-recorded cryptographic hashes enable detection of any modification to stored data, providing mathematical proof of integrity [30].

The distributed architecture eliminates single points of failure that plague centralized systems. Attacking the blockchain requires compromising the majority of independent nodes simultaneously, an exponentially more difficult task than compromising a single central database server. Similarly, IPFS's distributed storage means

files are replicated across multiple nodes, and removing all copies would require coordinated attacks on multiple geographically dispersed servers [36].

Access control is enforced cryptographically through smart contracts rather than relying on institutional security policies that can be violated or bypassed. Patient authorization is recorded immutably on the blockchain, and smart contracts automatically verify authorization before granting access, eliminating the possibility of unauthorized access due to administrative error or insider threats [15].

Transparency and Auditability

MediLocker creates complete audit trails documenting every interaction with patient medical records. Each access event, modification, and sharing action is recorded immutably on the blockchain with timestamps and actor identification [33]. Patients can access this audit log at any time, observing exactly who accessed their records, when access occurred, and what data was viewed.

This transparency fundamentally changes the trust model in healthcare. Rather than requiring patients to trust institutional policies and security practices, patients can verify that their data is protected through cryptographic mathematics and distributed consensus. Healthcare providers can trust that patients cannot retroactively modify or deny their earlier consent, as smart contract records are immutable [5].

The immutable audit trail satisfies regulatory audit requirements and provides evidence in case of legal disputes. If a healthcare provider claims they accessed a patient's records, the blockchain audit log provides definitive proof of access timestamp and authorization status. Conversely, if a patient claims data was accessed without authorization, the blockchain record demonstrates whether access was actually granted [37].

Patient Control and Data Ownership

MediLocker fundamentally shifts healthcare data ownership from institutions to patients. Patients retain cryptographic keys necessary to decrypt their medical records, and smart contracts enforce patient-defined access policies without exception [27].

Patients gain granular control over data sharing. Rather than granting blanket access to all medical records, patients can authorize specific providers to access specific data categories for defined time periods. A patient can authorize access to cardiac records for a cardiologist while denying access to psychiatric records, and authorize temporary access to imaging studies for a radiologist consultation [3].

Patient empowerment extends to research participation. Patients can authorize researchers to access anonymized health data for medical research while retaining the ability to revoke access or modify authorization conditions. Smart contracts can implement data usage agreements specifying permissible research purposes and generating payments to patients for data usage, creating a market mechanism for healthcare data that appropriately compensates data sources [38].

Interoperability and Seamless Data Exchange

MediLocker enables seamless medical record exchange across healthcare providers regardless of their individual EHR system implementations. By storing records on a decentralized blockchain infrastructure, MediLocker creates a unified platform accessible to any authorized healthcare provider [5].

Smart contracts can implement data transformation and format conversion, enabling healthcare providers using different EHR standards to access each other's records. The blockchain serves as a common reference point and coordination mechanism, allowing healthcare providers to discover where patient records are stored and how to access them [14].

Integration with interoperability standards like HL7 and FHIR (Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources) enables MediLocker to exchange data with existing healthcare IT systems. Medical records can be exported in standard formats that existing EHRs can import, and existing systems can export records to MediLocker for long-term distributed storage [39].

Limitations And Challenges

Scalability Constraints

Blockchain technology faces scalability fundamental limitations compared to centralized databases. Ethereum's current throughput is approximately 12-15 transactions per second, compared to healthcare systems processing thousands of database operations per second [40]. While MediLocker's architecture offloads large file storage to IPFS and records only metadata on the blockchain, the transaction throughput still limits how many simultaneous access requests can be processed.

Layer-2 scaling solutions including state channels, sidechains, and rollups can increase transaction throughput, but they introduce additional complexity and potential security trade-offs. Plasma-based sidechains can process thousands of transactions per second but sacrifice some decentralization properties [21].

Regulatory Compliance Challenges

The immutability of blockchain creates tension with privacy regulations. GDPR's "right to be forgotten" requires that individuals can request deletion of their personal data, but blockchain records are permanent and cannot be deleted without compromising system integrity [23].

MediLocker addresses this challenge through pseudonymous on-chain identifiers and off-chain data storage. Patient identities are not directly recorded on the blockchain; instead, encrypted references are stored. Off-chain data can be deleted, with only cryptographic references remaining on the blockchain [1]. However, this approach requires careful implementation to ensure that deleted off-chain data cannot be recovered through forensic analysis.

Regulatory uncertainty in different jurisdictions creates additional challenges. Healthcare regulations like HIPAA and GDPR were written before blockchain technology existed, creating ambiguities about how blockchain systems must comply with regulations designed for centralized architectures [41].

Integration with Legacy Healthcare Systems

Many healthcare institutions operate legacy EHR systems that were designed for centralized architectures and do not support blockchain or smart contract integration. Integrating MediLocker with these systems requires middleware that can bridge the architectural differences [26].

Healthcare institutions may be reluctant to adopt blockchain systems due to unfamiliarity with the technology, concerns about regulatory acceptance, and concerns about disrupting existing workflows that staff are trained on. Change management and staff training represent significant implementation challenges [7].

Key Management and Recovery Challenges

Blockchain systems rely on cryptographic keys for authorization and transaction signing. If a patient loses their private key, they permanently lose the ability to access their encrypted medical records, as the encryption is tied to their private key. Unlike traditional systems where administrators can reset passwords, blockchain systems offer no recovery mechanism [42].

MediLocker must implement key recovery mechanisms while maintaining security. Options include:

- Social recovery schemes where other trusted individuals can collaboratively help recover keys
- Distributed key management where key components are stored with different parties
- Hardware wallets providing secure key storage but risking loss if the hardware device is damaged

Energy Consumption Considerations

Blockchain systems using Proof-of-Work consensus mechanisms (like Bitcoin) consume substantial electricity, raising environmental and sustainability concerns. Ethereum historically used Proof-of-Work but transitioned to Proof-of-Stake in 2022, reducing energy consumption by approximately 99.95% [14].

Healthcare organizations must evaluate the energy footprint of blockchain systems and consider sustainability implications, particularly given the healthcare sector's already significant environmental impact.

Future Scope

Advanced Cryptographic Techniques

Post-quantum cryptography represents a critical future research direction. As quantum computing advances, current cryptographic algorithms including RSA, ECC, and SHA-256 will become vulnerable to quantum attacks. Lattice-based cryptography, hash-based signatures, and multivariate polynomial systems offer quantum-resistant alternatives that MediLocker can integrate as quantum threats materialize [34].

Homomorphic encryption enables computation on encrypted data without decryption, allowing healthcare institutions to perform data analysis and medical research on encrypted records without exposing raw data. This technology would enable MediLocker to support advanced analytics while maintaining absolute data privacy [10].

Integration with Emerging Technologies

Internet of Medical Things (IoMT): Integration with IoT-based medical devices including wearables, remote monitoring sensors, and smart medical devices would enable continuous health monitoring with automatic recording to MediLocker's distributed ledger [43].

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning: AI models trained on aggregated health data could identify disease patterns and personalized treatment recommendations while preserving patient privacy through federated learning. MediLocker could serve as the data coordination platform enabling AI models to train across decentralized data without centralizing raw data [22].

Genomic Data Management: MediLocker could be extended to manage genomic data, which raises unique privacy concerns due to genetic information's family implications. Blockchain-based access control could enforce granular policies over genomic data sharing with researchers while protecting family privacy [14].

International Healthcare Data Exchange

Future development could enable international healthcare data exchange, allowing patients to maintain unified health records accessible across borders. This would require integrating MediLocker with healthcare systems

in different jurisdictions while respecting varying regulatory requirements [20].

Decentralized Health Insurance and Claims Processing

Smart contracts could automate health insurance claims processing, eliminating intermediaries and accelerating reimbursement. Automated verification of medical necessity could reduce claim denials and disputes [38].

CONCLUSION

MediLocker demonstrates how blockchain technology can transform healthcare data management by combining decentralized architecture, cryptographic security, smart contract automation, and distributed storage to create a patient-centric healthcare record system that fundamentally addresses limitations of traditional centralized EHR systems.

The system provides measurable improvements across critical healthcare IT dimensions. Security is enhanced through cryptographic encryption and immutable audit trails that detect tampering. Data integrity is guaranteed through distributed redundancy and cryptographic hashing. Patient control is maximized through smart contract enforcement of access policies. Interoperability is enabled through blockchain's neutral platform that any healthcare provider can access [20].

Technical implementation demonstrates feasibility and practical utility. Performance benchmarks show sub-200 millisecond latency for access control operations, IPFS storage success rates exceeding 99.5%, and transaction throughput meeting healthcare operational requirements. The system achieves full compliance with HIPAA security requirements and GDPR privacy principles including consent management and right-to-access provisions [1].

Challenges remain, including blockchain scalability, regulatory compliance tensions, and integration with legacy healthcare systems. However, these challenges are engineering problems with known solutions rather than fundamental barriers. Layer-2 scaling solutions can increase transaction throughput. Regulatory frameworks are evolving to accommodate blockchain technology. Integration middleware can bridge modern blockchain systems with legacy healthcare IT infrastructure [26].

The healthcare industry stands at an inflection point where blockchain and decentralized technologies enable fundamentally better healthcare data management. MediLocker exemplifies how these technologies can be combined to create patient-centered, secure, and interoperable systems that improve healthcare delivery while respecting patient privacy and autonomy [4]. As blockchain technology matures and regulatory frameworks evolve, systems like MediLocker represent the future of healthcare data management.

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