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Healthcare AI

How artificial intelligence can transform NHS patient services

Frederik Brabant, MD | VP International Channel Sales

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Artificial intelligence (AI) could easily be defined as the technology industry buzzword for 2017, with almost every vendor trying to attach themselves in some way to this rapidly developing trend. Once purely the splendor of sci-fi - with films such as Terminator and I, Robot predicting the demise of the human race - AI is now actively transforming our daily lives, from helping us pay bills to supporting doctors to determine patient ailments.

Intelligent investments

Nearly half of NHS trusts (43%; obtained from a Freedom of Information (FoI) request) are investing in artificial intelligence (AI) enabling patients to 'self-help' when accessing services. The trusts are harnessing technology such as virtual assistants, speech recognition technology and chat bots to ease the pressure on healthcare workers across their organisations.

These vital investments are geared up to primarily provide access to information and services all-day, every-day, but they also play a key role in reducing the numbers of patients queuing to see their GP for information they can now access through a virtual assistant.

Reducing the documentation deluge

Research commissioned by Nuance in 2015 into the impact of clinical documentation in NHS acute care trusts revealed that clinicians spend over half of their work day on clinical documentation. In a more recent Nuance study of UK GP practices, over nine in 10 reported that patient documentation was a considerable burden for their practice and that in 49 per cent of the practices, over half their patient documentation is paper versus electronic format.

By deploying technology – such as speech recognition and artificial intelligence – clinicians can process clinical documents quickly and accurately, reducing the need to outsource transcriptions or hire additional secretarial support. Alongside improving the speed and efficiency in terms of the *process* of building clinical documents, Artificial Intelligence can support the development of more *accurate* and intuitive clinical documentation, including patient records.

With staff across the NHS already under enormous pressure to deliver first-class services, access to supporting technology to ease this pressure will be key. Yet many doctors are still forced to spend half of their time documenting patient care. While it is encouraging that some departments within trusts are using tools like speech recognition, with nearly all of them still reliant on pen and paper in some form, there is a significant opportunity to drive up this usage across the board.

Our goal is to bridge the gap between patients, doctors and technology, putting patients in a position where they have access to vital information and support anywhere and at any time, and freeing doctors up to focus on the patients most in need. The combination of these two aspects working in tandem should see a far more resourceful NHS, with delays on the decline and healthier, happier and more informed patients on the rise.

Read the full article here

Tags: Digitisation of the NHS, Patient-provider experience

More Information

About Frederik Brabant, MD

Frederik Brabant, MD is Chief Medical Information Officer at Nuance where he is in charge of the European healthcare market strategy. He joined the team in 2006 and has focused on bringing innovative speech recognition and coding solutions to the healthcare market in a variety of roles ranging from product management to marketing, both in EMEA and North America. He is a medical doctor specializing in sports medicine, holds an engineering degree, and successfully completed the International Management Program at the Vlerick Business School in Brussels.

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