

Documentation capture, Healthcare AI

Clinical speech recognition at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS FT and Royal Cornwall NHS Trust

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Earlier this month, we hosted a Digital Health Best Practice Webinar with our partner Microsoft, exploring how NHS Trusts across the UK have been using AI-powered clinical speech recognition to help mitigate the impact of the global pandemic.

As well as key insights from myself, Dr Simon Wallace (Chief Clinical Information Officer at Nuance), and Stephen Docherty (Industry Executive for Health, Microsoft), we also heard directly from Luke Stockdale (Director of Digital Transformation and Innovation, Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust) and Ian Nicholls (eHealth Transformation Manager, Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust) about their own experiences during this time and their hope for continued innovation moving forwards.

The challenge of clinical documentation

Clinicians are overwhelmed and de-motivated by excessive admin

Profession	Hours per week
Overall	10.8
Doctors	11.5
Nurses	10.7
Therapists	11.1

Research suggests clinicians spend on average around **11 hours per week** adding to clinical documentation (doctors slightly more than nurses)²

Almost **1 in 3** doctors 'burnt out' and stressed
(Based on UK survey conducted before COVID-19 pandemic).¹

47% cited having too many bureaucratic tasks (e.g. note-keeping, paperwork) as their reason for burnout.¹

References:
 1. Microsoft UK Doctors' Burnout & Lifestyle Survey 2018
 2. Nuance Clinical Documentation Challenge Report

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The gift of time?

COVID-19 has undoubtedly been one of the toughest periods in the history of healthcare; so, it stands to reason that it was the recurring theme throughout the discussion. Those on the front line – hospital doctors, GPs, nurses and other healthcare professionals – have worked tirelessly to ensure they are able to treat those with the virus, whilst still being able to provide essential services and potentially lifesaving treatments in other areas. With so much additional strain on the NHS's resources, it can feel as if paperwork is yet another heavy and time intensive burden for clinical professionals. But, the need for quality clinical documentation has never been more important.

This is why many hospitals are turning to our speech recognition technologies. Not only do these technologies save time – due to the fact that humans typically speak up to three times faster than we type – they also enable clinical professionals to focus on what really matters; their patients. During the webinar, Microsoft's Stephen Docherty mentioned the NHS's Long-Term Plan and how his company's [partnership with Nuance](#) aims to embody this through empowering clinicians, during COVID-19 and beyond, granting them the gift of time by reducing the amount of effort that goes into clinical documentation, without compromising on its quality.

Helping our unsung heroes

During the webinar we heard from two NHS trusts who have implemented speech recognition technologies and used them to help fight the COVID-19 crisis. Both hospitals undertook significant changes in response to the pandemic, with many elective services put on pause, consultations going digital to reflect social distancing guidelines and new remote ways of working being introduced.

For Luke Stockdale from Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust, the key during this period was to try and support all staff members, as well as patients, and implementing voice recognition into everyday working practices played an important role in this. Through removing a big component of typing, this technology freed up time and enabled doctors to maintain eye contact with patients whilst treating them. Having seen the benefits during physical appointments, moving forward, the trust is looking into how speech recognition can support virtual consultations conducted over the phone.

Similarly, Ian Nicholls discussed how Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust had been forced to act quickly in recent months when it foresaw a potential reduction in staff resource and capacity due to the impending crisis. This accelerated their requirements for Nuance's speech recognition solutions. Since then, the uptake has been rapid throughout the trust, with this month alone showing a significant spike in usage as lockdown measures ease and more hospital services resume.

Ian highlighted the technology's ease of use and the benefit of it being a cloud-based solution with online follow up masterclasses from Nuance – especially during COVID-19, when deployment had to take place remotely. Thanks to this, the cardiology nurses at the trust were up and running in just two days.

A commitment to a digital future

Both NHS leaders closed by adding that even though COVID-19 has had its challenges, it also provided a platform for accelerating digital transformation throughout their organisations.

The global pandemic has spurred a newfound commitment to innovation throughout healthcare. This is something that we must seek to continue post-pandemic. After all, artificial intelligence has the power to reimagine patient services as we know them; easing the administrative burden placed upon clinical professionals and helping to improve the patient experience.

Thank you to all those who attended our Webinar this month. If you missed it, [you can still listen in here](#). Please also join us for Luke Stockdale's presentation at the Digital Health Virtual Summer School at 12.50pm on Friday 24th July: <https://digitalhealthsummerschools.com/>

Tags: [Digitisation of the NHS](#), [Electronic patient records \(EPR\)](#)

More Information

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About Dr. Simon Wallace

Dr. Simon Wallace is the Chief Clinical Information Officer (CCIO) of Nuance's Healthcare division in the UK and Ireland. Simon has worked as a GP, hospital and public health doctor in Brighton and London. His interest in health informatics began in the 90s when he spent a year at the King's Fund investigating the impact of the internet on shared decision making between patients and their healthcare professional. For the past 15 years, he has worked for a range of organisations including Bupa, Dr Foster, Cerner Corporation and GSK across a range of technologies which include electronic patient records, telemedicine, mobile health and lifestyle devices. Simon has a keen interest in the voluntary sector, recently completing a 7 year term as a Trustee for Fitzrovia Youth in Action, a children and young people's charity based in London.



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