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AI can help scale up health care delivery in India: Ashutosh Lawania

16 September 2019 | Interviews

mfine, an AI powered, on-demand healthcare service which enables virtual medical consultations, is now live in Delhi-NCR. In an interaction with BioSpectrum, Ashutosh Lawania, Co-founder, mfine talks about the recent expansion of the company and more



Can you throw some light on your recent expansion in Delhi-NCR?

mfine is an AI powered, on-demand healthcare platform which enables on-demand outpatient health care services on our platform, patients can consult the doctor via video, audio and text consultations from top hospitals. They can also manage their health records and avail other healthcare services such as preventive health checks, diagnostics services and home delivery of medicines. mfine has been building its hospital partner network in Delhi NCR and has tied up with city's leading hospitals such as CK Birla Hospital for Women, Sarvodaya Hospital & Research Centre, Asian Hospital and Institute of Medical Sciences, Cloudnine Hospital, Aakash Hospital, Paras Hospitals, Medeor Hospitals, Mother land Hospitals, and Orchid Hospital Maternity and Heart Centre. Currently, Delhi NCR accounts for 15% of consultations done on mfine. To address this demand and increase accessibility for consumers in Delhi NCR, we plan to sign up 75 hospitals and more than 500 doctors in the next 6 months. The company will also expand into all relevant pockets of the growing NCR.

What are your further expansion plans in India and globally?

Our mission is to create the largest virtual hospital of India and provide on-demand quality healthcare to patients. We plan on expanding our hospital network in 40 cities across India and enabling end-to-end outpatient care on the mfine platform in those cities.

Why AI & data analytics are the health boost that Indian healthcare urgently needs?

We strongly believe that AI can help scale up the health care delivery in India where the doctor-patient ratio is already poor and help these providers deliver standardized care across conditions. As we know, huge amount of health-related data is generated, when its gathered and processed, it can help doctors take more informed decisions by interpreting the test results or patients records. This data driven approach can further help in providing accurate diagnosis and treatment plan.

Do you see any gap as far as digital healthcare in India is concerned?

One of the key challenges in the Indian healthcare industry is ensuring that regulatory frameworks keeps pace with innovation so that progress is not hampered. It's very important for the nation to have a regulatory framework to guide innovation so that the interests of all the stakeholders, especially patients are safeguarded. Digital healthcare solutions are gaining validation from various international agencies and this helps in the faster adoption of technology by providers.

The meaning of digital health is ambiguous in the minds of different stakeholders, for some it may simply be that digital health equals EHRs (electronic health records). But digital health is much more than just digitizing the patient records. There needs to be more conversation about the opportunities digital health offers to both the private as well as the public sector. Changing perceptions can also help in the faster adoption of technology. Analysis says that cost is one of the major barriers in the adoption of digital technology, but that is not the case. Adoption of digital technology in fact reduces the operational costs and making healthcare delivery more economical.

What are the future plans of the company? Any collaboration or product in the pipeline?

We are collaborating with the leading hospitals in each market and are further looking at expanding to Tier-II cities and smaller pockets of the country as well. We also plan on enabling other services such as Preventive Health Checks, Diagnostics, Medicine Delivery in all the other cities beyond Bangalore and Hyderabad. We will continue to add new specialties and long-term care program on our platform.