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Is healthcare industry still reluctant to take full advantage of technology?

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The healthcare industry needs to accept digital transformation to prepare for the next phase of patient care



Over the years, technology has continued to prove its worth by catapulting different companies towards the path of success. With recent technological advancements, several industries have understood the importance of digital transformation and have made every effort to adapt to it. However, one sector has always been reluctant to take its full advantage- healthcare. According to a survey, only 7% of the healthcare companies have gone digital as compared to 15% in other industries.

Historically speaking, digital transformation within the medical ecosphere has been relatively sluggish. The healthcare and pharmaceutical industries have lagged behind when it comes to implementing digital strategies but that was until COVID-19 hit. COVID-19 necessitated hospitals, pharma companies, and diagnostic companies to digitally tap into the $200 billion healthcare spend in India and brought to light the role of technology. Having seen the benefits of technology quickly accrue, digital healthcare feels like the new normal. Here is how digital transformation will benefit healthcare services, patients and staff for the better.

Enabling on-demand healthcare

In 2021, people demand flexibility and access. Not many imagined speaking to a doctor over a video call few years ago but today over a million video consultations happen on a daily basis. Patients are getting adequate medical attention whenever and wherever they want. On-demand, digitally-led healthcare has the power to transform the entire healthcare ecosystem.

In the current scenario, patient care typically ends when the patient steps out of the doctor's chamber. A follow-up occurs only in the event of a relapse. With tech-led tools, doctors will be able to follow up on patient cases more efficiently and regularly, scheduling visits only if required. On the other hand, patients will have greater access to their doctors. In case a follow-up visit should occur, patients will not have to discuss their entire case histories all over again. Practitioners will have the data handy, thereby bolstering patient satisfaction and offering better care to each patient they treat.

Digital Doctor Platforms

In the rapidly changing world of science, where doctors need to stay up-to-date with the latest in medical science to provide superior outcomes to the patient, relying on medical conferences or medical representatives is passé. On demand knowledge platforms can enable doctors to quickly understand clinical protocols, learn about solving complicated patient cases, learn new surgical techniques, etc. Platforms that allow doctors from one part of the world to interact with doctors from other parts of the world can bring the healthcare fraternity closer to collaborate on innovations. Interacting with experts and learning through videos, podcasts, chatcasts can truly create a digital decision support system bringing uniformity in patient outcomes.

This is especially beneficial for a vast country like India, where no two regions have similar access to healthcare and medical knowledge. With uniformity in medical information available with doctors across geographies, people will no longer need to travel to cities to get quality medical care. The entire ecosystem – doctors, nurses, pharmacists, etc. – will be aligned in terms of their knowledge and capabilities leading to better patient outcomes across the country.

Bolstering accuracy with Big Data

In the healthcare space, minor inaccuracies can quickly turn into fatal errors. Luckily, there is a way to avoid that from happening. Hospitals can use technology tools that use predictive analysis of big data to highlight inconsistencies in a patient's record and immediately alert the hospital staff to minimize the risk of medical error. It can also be used to monitor the admission process so that adequate staff can be hired to look after the patients. Further, Big data has the ability to predict the rising incidence of disorders in specific regions alerting doctors and healthcare staff to respond accordingly unified patient record management and driving data-driven outcomes is a necessary investment for all hospitals enabling them to respond swiftly to changing dynamics in patient care.

Artificial intelligence

AI is set to transform the healthcare sector for the better. Whether it is nurse robots in Japan or chatbots to fill the roles of customer representatives or therapists, artificial intelligence has been versatile enough to give a modern-day feel to the healthcare industry. One of the most significant contributions of AI is observed in the areas of drug discovery, medical imagery

and precision medicine, which has reduced the failure rates of complicated surgeries by a huge margin. Because of this, AI continues to make inroads into mainstream healthcare and can unlock value for both healthcare providers and patients alike

The healthcare industry needs to accept digital transformation to prepare for the next phase of patient care. With continuous advancements, technology will help healthcare companies to meet the present-day medical needs and build future-ready companies.

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