Empowering Patient-Centric Healthcare: AI Integration, Health Literacy, and Insights

A conversation with industry thought leaders and patient advocates, Matt Eagles and Trishna Bharadia.
Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of healthcare, where patient advocacy and technological advancements intertwine, a profound opportunity for transformation emerges. This paper embarks on a journey to explore this intersection, shedding light on the pivotal role of Artificial Intelligence (“AI”) in reshaping the healthcare experience from a patient’s perspective.

Within these digital pages, we engage in insightful conversations with industry thought leaders and patient advocates, Matt Eagles and Trishna Bharadia as they share their perspectives on the dynamic relationship between patients, healthcare professionals (HCPs), and AI. Focusing on three critical aspects: healthcare communications, health literacy, and AI advancements.

AI Integration in Healthcare: Transforming Patient Access to Medical Information

“In a world where [AI] is integrated into healthcare, it revolutionizes physician–patient communication, simplifying complex medical jargon into understandable language” as highlighted by Nashwan, Abujaber, and Choudry in the Gastroenterology & Endoscopy Journal (Vol 1, Issue 3). This results in an informed patient base more likely to adhere to their care plans. Through the perspectives of Trishna and Matt, we explore how AI is reshaping patient access and comprehension of medical information.

**How can the integration of AI technologies in healthcare influence the way patients access and understand medical information?**

“Whilst this is still an evolving space, I think the most immediate impact has been the accessibility of information. AI technologies are making it much quicker and easier to translate information into different languages, for instance. Although we’re not yet there in terms of perfecting it, it’s definitely making things easier. Being able to access a wealth of information more quickly and in an “intelligent way” has made it easier to filter what’s relevant and what’s not so patients are able to more easily learn about their conditions from information that is specific to them. I do a lot of work in the area of plain language summaries of publications (PLS) and clinical trial results (lay summaries) and AI has huge potential here to accelerate the creation of such documents. This will make it easier to produce greater volumes of PLS and lay summaries, improving people’s access to information and knowledge that would traditionally only be seen by their HCPs. This means that patients are more informed and better prepared to face health challenges and embark on discussions with their HCP” says Trishna.

Likewise, Matt highlights how “with the successful integration of AI technologies into all aspects of our daily life from shopping on Amazon to listening to music on Spotify, people absorb content voraciously on a variety of platforms often without knowing they are doing it. It’s the same in healthcare people google symptoms, access health information from patient groups and organisations, browse Twitter, (X) TikTok, Facebook, (Meta), Reddit and Instagram. YouTube leads the way in video content, but specialist sites have also sprung up like Mediflix which hosts purely medical content. All these platforms have algorithms in common, that feed the hunger for information by suggesting content that might be of interest and it is revolutionising the way in which patients consume and understand medical information[...]”
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Over the past few years most patients have become familiar with the NHS app because of the Covid-19 Pandemic where you can access your digitised medical records, your vaccine and immunisation history, repeat prescriptions, appointment calendar, view correspondence and check symptoms. There are also apps for detecting lots of potential medical issues like SkinVision for detecting skin cancers. Apps for mapping and identifying psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis. There is pretty much an App for every disease area and they a vast amount of data which benefit patients in their quest to manage and be pro-active in managing their own healthcare.

“Studies have found that interventions to improve communication resulted in a 43% increase in achieving patient-reported goals of care”, according WellBe. This underscores the potential for AI, with its capabilities, to serve as a valuable component of such interventions aimed at enhancing communication in healthcare. The integration of AI in healthcare has ushered in a new era of patient empowerment, making medical information more accessible, understandable, and applicable in everyday life.

Leveraging AI for Enhanced Health Literacy: A Patient Advocate’s Perspective

“Many clinicians’ communication skills aren’t formally assessed during their education or early practice, and there’s ample evidence that clinicians often face challenges in communicating with patients. It’s difficult to improve in the absence of feedback or awareness of one’s performance,” notes senior author and Dartmouth Institute Professor Glyn Elwyn, MD, PhD, MSc. Similarly, patients may find it challenging to communicate with their physicians due to the nature of their condition, the stress of medical appointments, or limited health literacy. In our ongoing exploration, we delve into how AI-driven tools can enhance health literacy among patients and foster improved interactions between patients and healthcare professionals.

What are the key benefits of AI-driven tools in enhancing health literacy for patients, and how do these benefits translate into improved patient-HCP interactions?

“AI-driven tools can analyse patient data like symptoms and treatments and consultation notes can be analysed by natural language processing models to enhance digital patient records. This will enable the patients to have more confidence in consultations knowing they have been listened to previously and their comments

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WELLBE, THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CLINICAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN STAFF AND PATIENTS
[...] correctly recorded by the doctor. Knowledge and an ability to story tell with confidence are incredibly powerful tools to take into a consultation. Adding context to your symptoms is crucial to getting the best clinical advice. If a doctor knows that by prescribing a medication it will help give you the confidence to leave the house and visit your sick parents is a far more compelling narrative than simply saying this medication will help you” says Matt.

Expanding on the transformative possibilities of AI-driven healthcare tools, Trishna underscores the broader benefits of improved access to and understandability of medical information through AI tools. These advancements in health literacy empower patients to engage more effectively in shared decision-making and navigate the healthcare system with confidence.

“Any ways in which we can improve access to and accessibility/understandability of medical information is going to benefit patients, and AI tools have the potential to do both of these things. By improving health literacy, we can create a more informed patient community that has more confidence to participate in shared decision making with their healthcare team. We can reduce health inequalities and enable people to confidently and effectively self-manage, as well as navigate the healthcare system and the services they might require.

Trishna further elaborates that “With the pressures felt on healthcare systems across the globe and doctors having less time to see their patients, getting a head start on the conversations around healthcare decisions can only help to make the system more efficient. A more efficient system can mean better patient experience and outcomes, not just for people who may be accessing the system every now and then but particularly people who are living with long-term and/or multiple health conditions that need to access the system a lot and possibly in various different ways. We need to remember that AI isn’t just about helping patients directly, but indirectly too. For example, it can help HCPs to improve their communications skills by helping them to communicate with patients in simpler, easier to understand language”

TRISHNA BHARADIA, MFPM (HON), PATIENT ADVOCATE & PATIENT ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANT

From both perspectives, it’s evident that AI-driven tools offer substantial potential to empower patients, alleviate healthcare system pressures, and enhance overall patient experiences and outcomes.

Patient-Centric AI: Empowering Through Value and Involvement

With Patient-Centric AI, we explore enhancing health literacy and empowerment. One perspective shows the need to demonstrate AI’s value to patients. Another emphasizes patient involvement in AI development for relevance, accessibility, and trust.

What recommendations do you suggest ensuring that AI contributes positively to health literacy and fosters a more informed and empowered patient population?
To ensure that patients buy into everything AI has to offer you have to show them the value it will bring to their own healthcare. I.e., by allowing patients to self-triage or manage their symptoms based on data provided by apps it will empower them to perhaps take control of the number of visits they really need, saving them the time and expense of visiting the surgery. Not only does this benefit the patient but also the HCP giving them the time to see patients who perhaps need their time more urgently. [...] We need to involve patients in the development of AI tools, just the same way that we need to involve patients in other aspects of the healthcare ecosystem and medicines development lifecycle,” says Matt.

Matt’s perspective sheds light on the importance of demonstrating the tangible benefits of AI to patients, fostering a sense of ownership in their healthcare decisions and how AI can empower patients to take control of their health and optimize healthcare resources.

Likewise, Trishna’s insights reflect the broader goal of ensuring that AI-driven advancements align with patients’ real-world needs and capabilities. “In doing this we will make sure that the tools continue to drive improvements that are truly relevant and important to patients. And then once the tools are developed, we need to ensure that they’re accessible to patients and that patients are equipped with the skills and confidence to use them, particularly bearing in mind people who might not be digitally savvy or who might not have good access to digital technologies. We also need to provide education about this space, in order to build trust with patient communities, particularly where AI is being used with personal health data. All this can help leverage the power and benefits that AI has in improving health literacy and empowering the patient community.”

**Empowering Patient-Centric Healthcare: AI Integration, Health Literacy, and Insights**

In our exploration of industries’ efforts to align with patient-centric trends, especially within the AI domain, Trishna highlights the critical importance of continuous collaboration with patients in the development of AI technologies.

*From your perspective as a patient advocate, how can these industries proactively adapt to patient-centric trends, especially those involving AI?*

“I think organisations are thinking more now about how AI can be used as a tool to improve the patient experience and patient outcomes. It’s got them thinking even more about the patients. This needs to continue but needs to always keep patient needs in mind – this means we still need to be collaborating with patients in the development of AI technologies from the outset, so that they’re relevant and fit for purpose, they’re not just being developed “for technology’s sake.” This is important to always bear in mind,” says Trishna.

*Now, shifting our focus, are there patient-driven initiatives or movements related to AI in healthcare that they should be aware of and support? Matt provides his valuable insights:*

“The NHS have a dedicated an AI Ethics committee to help flag up the inevitable inequalities in the way AI driven solutions are developed and deployed in healthcare but provided relevant data sets are available to learn from there is no reason why by predictive AI cannot provide perfect solutions and encourage patient centric trends to be adopted and learnt from” says matt.
In these insights, Trishna and Matt have given us a glimpse into the evolving landscape of healthcare and AI, where patient-centricity and ethical considerations are at the forefront. As we transition to our conclusion, we’ll further unravel the potential that lies ahead in this dynamic convergence of healthcare and artificial intelligence.

**Conclusion**

In the evolving landscape of healthcare and technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerges as a transformative force. In this conversation we have engaged with industry thought leaders, Matt Eagles and Trishna Bharadia, who have highlighted AI’s profound impact from a patient’s perspective.

AI reshapes how patients access and understand medical information, enhances health literacy, and improves patient-HCP interactions. Trishna emphasizes AI’s inclusivity and intelligence, breaking language barriers and providing tailored information. Matt showcases how AI seamlessly integrates into our digital lives, making medical knowledge relatable and empowering patients.

In conclusion, there is an opportunity for AI to bridge patient advocacy and healthcare intelligence, fostering a patient-centric ecosystem. It’s not just a tool; it’s a beacon guiding us toward a future where patient needs and empowerment drive healthcare innovation.

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In doing this we will make sure that the tools continue to drive improvements that are truly relevant and important to patients.

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**References**


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