

More digital clout, more human centric healthcare

Glen Koskela, CTO and Head of New Business Development at Fujitsu Nordic, explains how digitalisation can bring about healthcare with humans at the centre.

Healthcare is at an extremely exciting point today. Digital innovations have moved our imagination and minds beyond practical issues and problem solving focusing merely on efficiencies. They have raised our expectations towards literally every aspect of care provisioning.

Digital is not the sole agent of real change. In order to fulfil the potential digital promises, we need to concentrate more on what factors – throughout care processes, policies, providers, and data available for them – can be enabled by digital to drive a better life for all of us. Digital enables transformation, but keeping our focus at those it impacts – us, as human beings – and the benefits we get is critical.

OUR DIGITAL HEALTHCARE JOURNEY

All Nordic countries have comprehensive public responsibility for basic healthcare. Attention has been given to backend processes with nearly universal usage of nation-wide health record systems – which undoubtedly have offered medical personnel plenty of advantages. It has also made healthcare processes IT-heavy as doctors' care efforts go to processes, records, systems and archives. We treat quality of processes, not quality of life.

Today the relationship between a patient and a doctor is at the core. Yet it is reactive to patient demand [read: you are already ill] and the system is not structured to facilitate lasting one-on-one relationships. Knowledge of us is no longer held by a single doctor and no single provider has total responsibility for our wellbeing. We are witnessing a breakdown of patterns that have so far

defined the boundaries of our healthcare systems. We need to become more involved in our own care. We need to understand what our options are.

Our journey already is largely a digital one, inside and outside clinic walls. We can get far more health information on ourselves than what can be gathered by a doctor during a 15-minute visit. Where we want to be is a near future where technology helps in understanding our condition. We want the data from us to lead to better care outcomes. We need affirmation that we receive a person-centred treatment.

DIGITAL SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

We need better predictions about our health. We deserve to be provided with evidence on how our life choices impact us on an everyday basis. We can reach out and prompt patients to get services that the system infers that they might need. We want to remain independent.

This knowledge can be captured by putting the fabric of our digital lives in the healthcare loop. In other words: get us involved. Always-on resources like fitness

wearables, personal connected health devices, smartphones and their apps, and ubiquitous IoT devices can collectively contribute to more intelligent diagnosis and follow-up. The options are virtually endless, but crucial to our success is to bring all this information together in a useful manner.

Knowledge could further come from better understanding of DNA and genealogy, medicine, data on geographical differences, age, sex, habits, lifestyle and so on, to digitally render the reality to address the areas of uncertainty in clinical decisions. New insights gained by analytics will prove invaluable to medical personnel, spanning all the way from the diagnosis stage to treatment and aftercare.

DIGITAL REIMAGINATION

Digital offers a huge enabling and transformative power. Shareable digital content enables us to improve our outcomes. We can achieve great results through digitalising the actual care process. This is perhaps the most powerful practical application and can take the form of digital care practices – enabling governments to

improve care efficiency, free up limited resources, and improve both agility and speed.

We can improve the treatment phase, using data insights and digital tools to drastically improve our knowledge of what happens after the diagnosis and how treatment is working. That is, has the patient been healed and how has the process leading up to and following treatment impacted the patient's life quality.

Digital presents a rare opportunity to reimagine what is possible. The more we commit to digital health clout, the more likely we are to see its benefits. We desire providers that create new ways to deliver care to us, and we desire providers that use analytics to offer better preventive care. With this comes a new level of awareness that influencing behaviour and treatment on an individual level and helping further diagnoses on a collective level brings us positive change. The journey towards human centric intelligent healthcare is incredibly rewarding: it is about us.

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