

AI is changing healthcare – what does it mean for you?

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now integrated across many areas of healthcare. From assisting with diagnostic imaging to personalising treatment plans and streamlining workflows, AI is becoming part of everyday clinical practice and reshaping how healthcare is delivered. In fact, it was estimated that between 2024 and 2025, AI usage in Australian healthcare increased from 70% to 93%.

By the time you complete your education, AI-enabled systems are likely to be present in most settings you work in. Developing familiarity now helps ensure you develop safe, confident and ethical professional habits in an increasingly technology-enabled healthcare system.

AI should support clinical practice – not make decisions

AI tools can assist clinicians by highlighting important information and supporting clinical reasoning, but they're not a substitute for professional judgement.

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) is clear that AI should enhance – not replace – clinical decision-making and accountability for patient care must always sit with the doctor or clinical team. AI outputs, such as risk scores or diagnostic suggestions, are best viewed as supportive information to be considered alongside clinical assessment, patient history and professional experience, with the final decision always made by a human.

Why this matters during medical training

For many students, exposure to AI begins during training, with AI-enabled tools already incorporated into imaging systems, electronic medical records and workflow platforms. Without a clear understanding of how these tools are intended to support clinical care, there's a risk of placing too much confidence in automated outputs or overlooking limitations in AI-supported information.

Training environments offer valuable opportunities to observe how experienced clinicians integrate, interpret and discuss AI outputs within everyday clinical workflows.

Benefits and opportunities of AI in healthcare

When implemented thoughtfully, AI can offer meaningful benefits for healthcare professionals and patients. Analysis of AI use in Australian healthcare highlights its potential to support efficiency by assisting with routine or time-intensive tasks, such as documentation and prioritisation, allowing clinicians to focus more on clinical reasoning and patient interaction.

AI tools can also contribute to more personalised and proactive care by analysing large datasets to support earlier identification of risk and more tailored care planning. The AMA recognises the value of AI-enabled diagnostics, including medical imaging and chronic disease support. In a healthcare system facing increasing workload pressures, AI has the potential to support access, continuity and sustainability of care when used with appropriate clinical, ethical and organisational safeguards.

Be aware of the limitations of AI

Despite its potential, AI has inherent limitations that you need to remain aware of. AI systems reflect the data on which they are trained, meaning outputs may be less reliable for certain populations or clinical contexts.

Also, some AI systems operate with limited transparency, which can make it difficult to fully understand how outputs are generated. Another recognised risk is automation bias, which is the tendency of humans to place greater trust in automated

outputs, even if they conflict with clinical impressions.

Maintaining professional curiosity and clinical judgement is therefore essential.

Preparing for an AI-enabled future

Medicine has always involved uncertainty, and AI does not remove this, it reshapes how clinicians engage with information. As AI becomes more embedded in healthcare, you'll increasingly be expected to understand how AI tools are used in clinical environments, critically appraise AI-supported information, and maintain professional accountability.

Engaging with these concepts now puts you in a strong position to adapt and practise with confidence as healthcare continues to evolve.

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