Future of Healthcare and Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Practical Insights and Diverse Perspectives on AI in Healthcare Project Management [1]

AI for Healthcare and Healthcare Insurance [2]

Dr. Deepa Bhide, MBBS, DCH, PMP

Introduction

Chronic diseases account for most illnesses, disabilities, and deaths worldwide and are the leading drivers of the increase in healthcare spending. A staggering $4.1 trillion in annual healthcare expenditures highlights the significant economic burden of healthcare in the United States [1]. Healthcare organizations at all levels are working toward reducing these numbers and providing a better quality of life for these patients. Along with healthcare provider organizations, healthcare insurance companies are making concerted efforts toward achieving these goals.

The intersection of healthcare and technology birthed a new era of innovation, and the health insurance industry is at its forefront. Artificial intelligence (AI) rapidly transforms how insurers operate, from streamlining claims processing to personalizing customer experiences. This article delves into the profound impact of AI on the healthcare insurance landscape, helping the industry provide simplified, tailor-made health insurance plans and services to reshape business models, improve efficiency, and, ultimately, enhance the lives of policyholders. The following trends highlight the transformative impact of AI in the medical and health insurance sectors, paving the way for more efficient, personalized, and cost-effective insurance services.

Chatbots for customer service - Conversational AI will transform customer service models and empower businesses to provide a personalized, efficient, and scalable support experience. Since most people can access the Internet and smartphones, using chat apps to interact with doctors or healthcare insurance companies is easier. AI-powered chatbots will improve customer service by handling inquiries and claims

[1] Editor's note: This series is by Dr. Deepa Bhide, a practicing pediatrician with additional experience in information technology and project management. Her 2023 series of articles introduced readers to a range of important issues related to programs, projects and PM in healthcare. In this new series, Dr. Bhide will interview experienced healthcare, IT and project professionals around the world to reflect on the impact of artificial intelligence on global healthcare. Learn more about Dr. Bhide in her author profile at the end of this article. To read previous works by Dr. Bhide, visit https://pmworldlibrary.net/authors/dr-deepa-bhide/

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efficiently. One of my patients mentioned to me, “Doc, my chatbot is so helpful in answering my queries, and it seems like I feel half cured!”. That was an exciting and reassuring comment.

Claims processing automation—Turnaround time to settle health insurance claims is one of the biggest bottlenecks for policyholders and healthcare insurance companies. This could result from manual processing needs to identify many potentially fraudulent claims. AI is streamlining claims processing to expedite reimbursements and reduce errors. For example, “Accelerating Automation for Insurance [2],” a study by Accenture, highlights that AI-powered automation has been able to speed up control by 70%, with the time saved being used for more accurate claims checks.

Personalized premiums—Healthcare insurance companies are realizing that insurance policies are no longer about one-size-fits-all and need to be tailored to the specific healthcare needs of clients. These organizations are leveraging AI to personalize premiums based on individual health data (both historical and current). With time, AI algorithms will continue to develop and grow, allowing healthcare insurance companies to better serve their client needs. Thanks to AI's ability to collect data from nearly any electronic platform and device, including wearable technology and social media interactions, to mention a few, a deeper and more detailed understanding of client demands and risk profiles will become possible.

Predictive risk assessment – Leveraging the patient's historical and current healthcare data and similar cohorts, clinical prognoses, or predictions is integral to healthcare. It increases the ability for improved diagnostic accuracy, therapeutic planning, disease prevention, and personalized treatment plans. AI is enhancing risk assessment by predicting health risks more accurately. Leveraging advanced algorithms and machine learning (ML) techniques to analyze vast amounts of patient data, ranging from demographics and medical history to diagnostic tests and treatment outcomes, companies like Anthem use predictive analytics to identify high-risk individuals for specific medical conditions and intervene early [3].

Fraud Waste and Abuse (FWA) Detection - AI-powered algorithms are increasingly used to detect patterns indicative of fraud, waste, and abuse in medical insurance claims by analyzing large volumes of medical claims. Machine Learning algorithms can detect irregularities and anomalies in billing patterns, duplicate claims, or other suspicious activities. For example, large healthcare organizations have implemented AI to analyze real-time claims data, flag suspicious activities, and reduce fraudulent payouts. These organizations invest heavily in these latest technologies to streamline their FWA processes.

Enhanced Underwriting Processes - AI is improving underwriting accuracy and efficiency. An AI-powered solution consolidating data from various sources, including risk assessments, current claims processing, and policy details, allows for more sophisticated analysis and monitoring of the medical underwriting process.

In addition, health insurers are using AI to monitor policyholders' health data for preventive care, comply with regulations, and manage risks effectively. AI technologies like robotic process automation (RPA) enhance operational efficiency across insurance processes. The following table illustrates changes in the various aspects of healthcare insurance with the intrusion of AI.

Aspect	**Then (Before AI)**	**Now (AI-driven Implementations)**
Claims Processing	Manual processing is prone to errors and delays.	Automates claims processing, reducing errors and speeding up reimbursements.
Premium Pricing	Standard premiums are based on general risk pools.	Analyzes individual health data for personalized premiums based on risk factors and behaviors.
Fraud Detection	Reactive methods, manual audits after claims processing.	Proactively detect fraud patterns in real-time, minimizing financial losses.
Customer Service	Call centers handling queries with long wait times.	Provide instant customer support, improving response times and satisfaction.
Risk Assessment	Traditional methods rely on historical data.	Uses predictive analytics to assess risks dynamically based on real-time data and trends.
Health Monitoring	Limited proactive monitoring and reliance on periodic check-ups.	Monitors real-time health data from wearables, prompting proactive interventions and care plans.
Underwriting Processes	Manual underwriting based on static criteria.	Analyzes complex data sets quickly, enhancing accuracy and efficiency.
Regulatory Compliance	Reactive compliance measures and manual audits.	Automates compliance checks, ensuring adherence to evolving regulations across different markets.
Medical Diagnosis	Physician-dependent diagnoses with potential for variability.	Aids in diagnosis by providing data-driven insights and supporting clinical decision-making.
Operational Efficiency	Labor-intensive processes with high administrative overhead.	AI technologies like RPA streamline administrative tasks, reducing costs and improving efficiency.

Figure 1: Comparison of the then and now situation with intrusion of AI in medical insurance

These examples demonstrate how AI technologies have transformed healthcare insurance operations, enhancing accuracy, efficiency, and patient outcomes through real-time data analysis and personalized care approaches.

AI integration in medical insurance and healthcare creates significant synergies that benefit both industries. Healthcare providers benefit from faster reimbursements, while insurers reduce operational costs and improve customer satisfaction by expediting claims resolution. By automating routine tasks, eliminating manual interventions, and leveraging data analytics, AI will drastically reduce the claims processing cycle time from weeks to days or even hours.

The intrusion of AI into health insurance also raises concerns. One major issue is data privacy. Health insurance involves highly sensitive personal information, and AI systems require access to vast amounts of data to function effectively. Ensuring this data is protected from breaches and misuse is crucial. Another concern is the potential for bias and hallucinations in AI algorithms. If the data used to train these systems is biased, it can lead to unfair treatment of certain groups. Additionally, there's the issue of transparency—how decisions are made by AI systems should be clear and understandable to consumers. Addressing these concerns requires a multi-faceted approach. First, robust data protection measures must be implemented, including encryption and access controls. Transparency is also key; insurers should disclose how AI models are used and decisions are made. Regular audits of AI systems can help ensure they are fair and unbiased. Involving diverse teams in the development of AI systems can also mitigate biases. Lastly, regulatory frameworks must evolve to keep pace with AI advancements and safeguard consumer rights.

The evolution of AI in the health insurance sector over the next five to ten years will be fascinating. AI will become more integrated into health insurance processes with more sophisticated predictive models that can forecast health risks and suggest personalized interventions. AI could also play a more significant role in managing chronic conditions by providing real-time insights and support. Additionally, advancements in natural language processing could enhance customer interactions by making them more intuitive and human-like. AI will likely drive a shift towards more personalized and efficient health insurance services.

Conclusion

Integrating AI in medical insurance and healthcare will enhance operational efficiency and reduce costs, improving patient care quality. By leveraging AI capabilities in data analysis, predictive modeling, and automation, both industries can achieve better outcomes for stakeholders—from faster claims processing and fraud detection to personalized healthcare plans and enhanced patient care. As these technologies evolve, the collaboration between medical insurance and healthcare sectors will likely lead to

further innovations and improvements in healthcare delivery and insurance services worldwide.

That said, critical considerations such as ethical implications, including data privacy, bias, and accountability, are vital in the responsible implementation of AI in healthcare.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this interview series are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of any entities or associated parties. Proprietary names of AI applications have been avoided unless explicitly mentioned by the interviewees.

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About the Author

Dr. Deepa Bhide

Hyderabad, India

Dr. Deepa Bhide, MBBS, DCH, PMP, has over 20 years of professional experience where she has blended medical practice and research with IT and Project Management. She juggles consulting, training, and operations and is proficient in clinical medicine, project management, and healthcare information technology. Starting her career as a medical practitioner, she has worked with varied organizations before her current stint as director and clinical expert for Inventurus Knowledge Solutions.

Deepa's growing interest and work in these areas, born from her day-to-day patient interactions, helped her view Project Management as a backbone of progressive healthcare. Her paper on "Patient Care - A Project Management Perspective" has received global recognition and acclaim. With a physician background as a solid foundation to leverage IT/PM skills and knowledge, Deepa has blended her broad-based experience and learnings to present a unified, holistic, and wholesome view of Project Management and Healthcare, a cross-domain confluence. Through various webinars, events, talks, and writings across platforms, Deepa has been an evangelist in championing global project management during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Gold medalist from Osmania University for standing First in the MBBS course, she pursued her DCH in Pediatrics and Child health. Deepa has served various roles in local and global Project Management Institute (PMI) regions. She remains actively engaged with PMI and has been a participant and speaker for various national and global meetings and online events.

Deepa lives in Hyderabad, India, and loves traveling, singing, and experimenting with global cuisine. She can be contacted at deepa.bhide@gmail.com.