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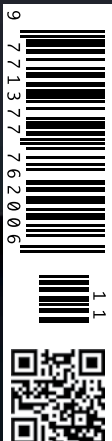
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Beyond Imaging, Towards a Care Pathway Approach Powered by AI



Giuseppe Recchi
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The healthcare industry is under transformation. An ageing population and the rise of noncommunicable diseases are driving an industry shift away from curing disease in the short term toward preventing and managing disease and promoting overall well-being in the long term. Across Europe, we see the same issues – underfunded and understaffed national health systems.

The Need for Earlier, Faster and More Accurate Diagnosis is Increasing

An estimated 75% of clinical decisions are based on a diagnostic test, raising the demand for access to quicker, more accurate diagnosis. Eurostat reported approximately 600,000 yearly deaths in Europe, avoidable if timely and effective detection and care provision had been provided. Chronic disease affects one-third of Europeans above the age of 15 and incidence is expected to rise. Furthermore, six in every 1,000 Europeans are diagnosed with cancer each year.¹

Healthcare is seeing a shift to out-of-hospital care – so hospital systems will continue to partner with outpatient service providers to efficiently provide care during a patient’s entire journey to health, keeping them out of hospital, improving their health status and reducing costs for national health systems.

Healthcare Empowered by AI

Artificial intelligence, robotics, automation and advanced digital and cognitive therapies are expected to disrupt current healthcare delivery models.

The analysis of big data with AI techniques will have an enormous impact on disease prevention, care and treatment. By effectively integrating data and analytics across the care pathway, medical professionals and staff can be better supported with

insights that enable them to bring predictive and personalised care. For example, AI powered software can provide more detailed insights, with more data points, invisible to the human eye. In cancer management, this can mean earlier detection allowing for potentially more favourable treatment outcome. Diagnostic imaging will expand its role in the broader healthcare spectrum with innovations allowing to avoid costly and invasive procedures. Advancements in precision medicine and detection of disease will minimise overall treatment costs while improving treatment outcomes.

However, these advancements won’t replace people with machines – it’s about creating a more accurate and more efficient patient pathway. In many European countries, pressure on health services is leading to shorter consultation times with less doctor-patient interactions. In Italy for example, the average GP consultation time is only around 10 minutes. AI will change the interaction between

“ THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE IS ALREADY HERE. THE POTENTIAL TO MAKE AN IMPACT FOR PATIENTS AND DOCTORS IS TRULY EXCITING ”

doctors and patients, speeding up the diagnostic processes, providing doctors with more granular data, allowing them to spend more time in discussion with patients.

We don’t see AI as a 'one-size-fits-all' solution, but rather a tool for a more personal doctor-patient

experience, which in the end will enhance patient satisfaction, provider productivity and overall quality of care. But this won't happen overnight.

At Affidea, We Have the Ambition to Lead the Healthcare Transformation

We're a digital healthcare company competing in today's world to solve tomorrow's challenges and we have the determination to shape our industry's future for the benefit of patients and doctors. We're committed to a care pathway approach, while embracing digital innovations. Although we're still on the journey, we've made great strides in revamping our strategy, portfolio of services and European footprint. It was a year of transformation, where we increased our focus in three strategic directions: expanding our footprint across Europe in the countries where we are present, enlarging our portfolio of outpatient care services and subspecialties and embedding AI in to our operations.

In the last 6 months, we added 34 new centers to our network, through acquisitions or greenfield, strengthening our position in advanced diagnostic imaging and adding new outpatient capabilities. The countries where we have expanded our presence this year are – Ireland, with the opening of three new ExpressCare centers, Italy with the acquisition of Medicenter clinics and NSL, Lithuania where the company added MPG centres doubling its presence in the country, Spain where we added Manchon Group, a reputed DI provider in Catalonia region and the most recent one in Hungary, adding the private outpatient provider, MSB, located in the biggest shopping malls of Budapest. Currently, we can say that we have a diversified business mix across advanced diagnostic imaging, lab diagnostics, teleradiology, outpatient and cancer care services.

We have established a network of sub-specialty expert radiologists in every country to collaborate across Europe. This network defines the best medical protocols, allowing for timely and high-quality diagnosis and faster and better treatment. We have developed 11 sub-specialty groups with representatives in all 16 countries, encompassing cardiac imaging, neurology, breast, musculoskeletal, GU/Prostate, GI/Abdominal, helping doctors with the right diagnosis tailored to the part of the body. By combining networked radiology and sub-specialty expertise, we can bring top specialist diagnostics to any location.

And we have launched two clinical products powered by AI. The first one - Affidea neuroInsight|MS, in partnership with icometrix, serves patients with multiple sclerosis and has been launched in 5 countries across our Group. Recently, we announced the launch of our second AI clinical product, Affidea breastInsight|Mammography, in partnership with ScreenPoint for the early detection of breast cancer.

And many more will join our portfolio of clinical products powered by AI. The scale of our operation gives us unique capabilities in the world of AI, benefitting from the rich data sets to drive forward innovations in patient care, in a GDPR and safe way for our patients - 14 million scans every year in our 273 centres, located in 16 countries across the continent.

The future of healthcare is already here. The potential to make an impact for patients and doctors is truly exciting. At Affidea, we are working with more than 9,400 passionate professionals, with one final goal in mind: better care, better patient experience. ■

Affidea at a glance:

- Multinational healthcare provider, with presence in 273 centres across 16 countries in Europe, providing high quality affordable care for millions of patients every year
- Working with over 9,400 professionals, producing 14 million scans every year
- Affidea is the only healthcare operator in Europe to sit on the Imaging Advisory Board of IBM Watson Health and also on Microsoft Cloud's board
- 50% of the European winning centres awarded by the European Society of Radiology belong to Affidea



REFERENCES

1.OECD Health at a Glance: Europe 2018.