Connected Care and Utilisation of Patient Data

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Connecting care teams to patients can drive patient engagement and improve treatment processes that can assist cooperative care. HealthManagement.org interviewed Xavier Battle, head of Marketing and Sales for the Digital Health Business Line for Siemens Healthineers, about the importance and benefits of connected care, application of real-time data, use of artificial intelligence, and wearable technology, and how connected care can combat the challenge of chronic disease and improve tele medicine utilisation.

Here are the key takeaways from Xavier:

1. Increased focus on connected health.

In the years to come, healthcare will focus more on connected health and delivering care beyond hospital walls to improve efficiency and increase patient convenience. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated a strong need for engaging with patients remotely. Once the constant risk presented by the pandemic disappears, this capability remains. Recent advances in personal/mobile devices, connectivity, and miniaturisation have also increased the public's awareness of the Internet of Things (IoT), so a healthy groundwork already exists. Critical to establishing connected care is a willingness to store, manage, share, and exchange data within a growing network of healthcare providers where patients become active participants.

2. Improved patient access to their healthcare data

Improving patients' access to their healthcare data will also simplify physician access to this information, including patient histories. Currently, physicians are limited to data that is only available in their IT environment and have trouble accessing information if patients move or change providers. When patients better engage in their care, having data access facilitates patient-physician communication, leading to improved situational awareness and subsequent decisions. Patients can also get second opinions more easily and weigh into their treatment options. Lastly, greater data access will solidify the trust between patients and their care teams, leading to greater patient satisfaction.

3. Improved decision-making with wearable technology and real-time data

The trend is for "smart" healthcare. IoT is a de facto healthcare standard for monitoring "well-being," given nearly ubiquitous wearable technology and real-time data collection. Everyone can effortlessly gather biometrics, track them over time, and receive recommendations for improvement. The same exists for many chronic conditions (e.g., cardiac arrhythmias when implanted defibrillators monitor the patient's condition and report to their physicians). Patients becoming actors in their care will drive demand for "smart" devices to record and analyse their data, connect to their physicians, and receive continuous and personalised care.

4. Combatting the increased prevalence of chronic diseases.

A goal for patients with chronic diseases is to lead normal lives despite having health conditions that require constant attention. This goal is incompatible with repeated and extended hospital stays. After tremendous innovation in treatments over generations, many with transplanted kidneys, insulin pumps, or pacemakers now lead nearly normal lives. Progress in "smart" devices for chronic disease monitoring and care allows patients to stay away from hospitals for most of their routine care. Connected care is also a formidable way to level access-to-care socioeconomic disparities by helping patients benefit from the best care, nearly independent of their location or access points. Lastly, by directly engaging patients daily, connected care can help increase patient compliance with their care plan, ultimately improving overall health outcomes.