

The importance and challenges of integrating digital technologies into healthcare practice and policy

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Abstract

Digital intervention is part & parcel of our modern day lives- whether it be buying airline tickets, having our choice of movies, shopping, or holidays. Yet when it comes to healthcare, the involvement of this in a day-to-day life setting? Has continued to be fraught with challenges- associated with suspicion and a clamour for data to justify its presence as part of standard care.

However, if one looks at the essence of healthcare- specifically long term conditions then it tends to stand on three planks namely self-management, peer support and access to trained professionals. If we look at what digital technology can provide it is obvious that all of these planks would benefit from further involvement off this intervention.

The challenge with implementing these digital interventions stems from a combination of factors namely fear of data utilisation, reluctance of professionals to embrace newer technology and an understandable worry about potential harm any new intervention can cause. There is there by the need to have relevant security as well as datasets to convince all concerned while at the same time appreciating that technology is now part and parcel of our lives which include healthcare provisions.

It is worth looking at solutions that are available in the world of diabetes via the use of digital technology whether that be interconnected use of pen devices or continuous glucose monitors along with data systems that integrate healthcare into one place. This offers the opportunity not only for the individual with diabetes- but also their carers to have a better overview of their care but also help healthcare professionals.

It is time to relook at how we deliver healthcare- and most importantly ask why digital healthcare isn't standard practice- rather than seen as an added extra.