



Parliamentary and Scientific Committee

Bringing Science and Parliament together

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AI and Health

Data, Data, and more Data.

You may think Artificial Intelligence is something only seen in Sci-Fi films set in the year 2050, when in reality AI is present in most of our living rooms in the form of smart speakers, such as the Amazon Alexa and the Google Home. This month's discussion meeting focused on how artificial intelligence can be integrated into our healthcare system and the benefits, as well as the possible problems.

Companies, such as Babylon Health, have taken huge steps forward to operate in a world where AI in healthcare is globally recognised, however in the United Kingdom we seem to be a couple of steps behind. The key to AI is vast amounts of useful data. Good quality data systems need to be set up with clear directives on what is being measured. This data must be accessible to all relevant parties, such as scientists, engineers, and doctors. Once that's in place, how do we collect the information needed? Initially we need to open up the option to the general public to share their personal data. This data being securely held and only available to reputable companies could create an influx of accurate data. Given the importance of sharing medical data for AI in healthcare it was suggested that, similar to organ donation, an opt out system is put in place.

The next step is to look into the regulation of AI in Healthcare. It's important that regulations and good practices are put in place with enough flexibility for growth and improvement, all while ensuring the safety and confidentiality of those who will use the technology. The Government must ensure there is a clear protocol to declare the purpose of the AI and what it will look like in the future, and health organisations must be incentivised to ensure they're met.

There is a concern about the lack of discussion surrounding the ethics of AI. There needs to be debate on the topic of a future where AI replaces current medical services. Healthcare services today have a wealth of records to look back on, so is there a case for replacing this established practise with a technology that has no history? The AI would have no incidents or unusual cases to compare with which begs the question of safety. There is no doubting the convenience and efficiency of seeing a virtual doctor online, especially for those who have difficulty getting to a GP surgery. Funding is critical for the success of AI, however there is the concern of underfunding the general practise we have today which could lead to those with chronic illnesses becoming neglected.

For many Artificial Intelligence is an enigma, however the benefits and possible issues of this technology are clear. Bringing the United Kingdom to the forefront of AI in health is a challenge. We need to gather data from both the UK and internationally. We also need to source the help of leading exponents in their respective fields from across the globe, thereby making the UK a hub for artificial intelligence.

Are there still technical, ethical and management questions to be answered? Yes, but from the small cross section of experts who spoke to us it's clear that there is promising future for AI in Healthcare.

*Charlotte Hall
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