BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

Digital healthcare, the next big thing

07 August 2013 | Opinion | By Nandita Singh

A radical shift in how healthcare is delivered globally is underway. Game-changing developments in sensor technologies with applications in diagnostics, big data and mobile healthcare apps are driving this trend. Dubbed as "connected healthcare" this trend is improving healthcare outcomes at lower cost, and in the process it is catalyzing an altogether new segment in the life sciences industry.

For instance, little known HSAGlobal, a New Zealand company that came into existence barely five years back, has put in place partnerships with service providers such as SingTel in Singapore. Currently, it is working with the Singapore Agency for Integrated Care on many advance care projects using its Collaborative Care Management Solution as a platform.

The company has similar partnerships with iehealthcare in the US and Telus in Canada to enable its connected care concept, in which primary, secondary and community care providers can jointly create a shared care plan, communicate with each other and provide input into the plan when they see the patient.

Among the many such platform technologies that are driving this trend of "connected healthcare" there is Language Querying Technology that is particularly disruptive in nature. It has application in clinical documentation. Using this technology M*Modal, an India-headquartered company, addresses the delayed notification problem caused by the specificity required in diagnosis and the coding system in practice by using natural language understanding (NLU).

The NLU is an advanced language querying technology that focuses on syntax, semantics and pragmatics to improve how structured data, free text, and system data are understood and coded. M*Modal's front-end NLU provides the physicians immediate feedback regarding missing information during the original input stage itself. It is this information that goes into the electronic healthcare record (EHR) of the patient.

Given that medical reimbursement systems are dependent on EHRs to function M*Modal's work is a major leap for healthcare industry improving the overall quality of electronic healthcare records. These records are the foundation on which healthcare delivery systems are built on in developed countries such as the US and in Europe and now the system is being adopted in Asian countries as well.

Covergence of information technology with other disciplines such as natural language processing and nanotechnology is certainly enabling affordable, anytime, anywhere healthcare. And delivery of this healthcare is getting increasingly personalized with genomics and mobile health applications.

In this segment on 'Healthcare', the BioSpectrum Asia web-portal features a range of articles covering varied facets of connected healthcare or digital health, which is becoming a popular nomenclature for an emerging sub segment in the industry. Many of these articles are written by industry captains in response to our call to share their insights with the larger peer group.