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"Must have access to credible information"

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How can technology be instrumental and more effective in empowering patients to manage diseases?

Technology which can provide educational information to patients in their own language and at the appropriate educational level, all in the comfort of the patient's own home, has tremendous ability to empower patients to achieve better health through disease prevention and maintenance. This vision of truly engaged patients who achieve better health outcomes at lower costs for everyone is why Elsevier, for example, has invested so heavily in Patient Engagement solutions.

For technology to truly empower patients, it is critical that the information provided to those patients is up to the medical standards of their physicians and other providers. Thus, we need both patient and provider technology to be capable of delivering credible, current, evidence-based information that is specifically relevant to that patient. Technology for providers, such as ClinicalKey that is integrated with Patient Engagement solutions allow both providers and patients to most effectively work together.

What are the challenges in implementing smart technologies for patients in developing countries?

Challenges for patients cannot clearly be separated from challenges for providers. For example, both must have access to credible, current clinical information. And truly smart technology must allow the provider to determine when and what content is pushed out to the patient, and when the patient's clinical situation should lead that smart technology to inform the provider. Smart technology that is able to educate the patient versus inform the provider will lead to improved efficiencies of care while maintaining or elevating clinical outcomes.

Is the regulatory environment evolving at the same pace with the rise of smart healthcare products and devices?

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Yes and no. In the United States, for example, levels of integrated technology are integral to healthcare reform; however, these are basic technological capabilities. More advanced technologies (such as smart technologies) are mostly driven by innovative hospitals and health systems. The HIMSS-Elsevier APAC Innovation Awards demonstrate that even in the absence of true regulatory requirements, many healthcare providers are moving ahead rapidly to advance the quality and efficiency of healthcare delivery through innovative uses of smart technology.

How can pharma and biotech companies be a media to introduce new health technologies to patients?

Those pharma and biotech companies which truly listen to providers and patients in order to understand actual opportunities to improve care delivery, and who then partner with smart technology companies, will be able to truly advance patient safety, resource utilization, and the cost efficiency of healthcare.
Is integration of new technologies in managing healthcare growing at the same pace as predicted by the market analysts? What have been the learning curves?
There is indeed a learning curve. As is often the case, we all would like to believe that technology will solve more problems, deliver greater ROI, than it actually can on its own. For example, EHRs are excellent in improving certain aspects of care delivery, but the technology alone can't solve all of the problems of today's healthcare. Patient education technology is only beneficial if patients are first truly engaged. What we are really learning is that it is through a combination of technology and human-to-human interaction that we can achieve significant improvement in the health of our populations.

What are some of your favourite impressive smart technologies that have entered into the healthcare sector?

I am fortunate in having been a judge for the recently concluded 2015 HIMSS-Elsevier APAC Innovation Awards and seeing tremendous and creative uses of technology to advance healthcare. Some of the winners, such as a new entirely "Digital Hospital" built in Hervey Bay, Australia, are simply unbelievable and will no doubt serve as the "gold standard" for care moving forward. Others, such as the award winning project from Singapore (KK Women's and Children's Hospital and the Integrated Health Information Systems' Emergency Outpatient Pharmacy Automation System), which uses technology to fully automate prescription bottle filling from the time of the doctor's prescribing to the handing of the medication to the patient, demonstrates how technology can be creatively used to both increase patient satisfaction and more efficiently utilize hospital staff and resources. And there are many, many other equally impressive examples across the Asia Pacific region.

How do you see Asia rising to implement technologies in managing diseases?

Asia's enormous population produces unique health challenges relative to the U.S., Europe, and other global regions. Because of the size of the populations, as well as significant language and cultural differences, and the enormous geographic distances of the region, technology is critical to improving APAC health outcomes and controlling care delivery costs. Already I have been privileged to be part of new movements in Asia, including the recent APAC Patient Safety Conference, sponsored by the Malaysian Ministry of Health and Elsevier, attended by healthcare representatives across the region. I also spoke at the Hospital Management Asia conference held in Myanmar, where the enthusiasm from the large audience was tremendous. These and other examples make it clear that Asia is aggressively seeking ways to use technology to meet the unique challenges of the region.