

New forms of health manpower: Transforming healthcare delivery

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INTRODUCTION

The landscape of healthcare is rapidly evolving, driven by technological advancements, shifting patient needs and a growing demand for accessible and efficient services. As a result, new forms of health manpower are emerging to address these challenges, transforming the way healthcare is delivered. In this article, we will explore the changing dynamics of the healthcare workforce, focusing on the emergence of telemedicine, AI-assisted healthcare professionals and community health workers. These new forms of health manpower not only expand access to care but also enhance the quality and efficiency of healthcare services.

DESCRIPTION

Telemedicine and telehealth professionals

Telemedicine has become a revolutionary force in modern healthcare. It involves the use of telecommunications technology to provide clinical healthcare services at a distance, enabling healthcare professionals to diagnose, treat and consult with patients remotely. Telemedicine has seen rapid growth in recent years, especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and it is transforming the healthcare workforce in several ways.

Telemedicine physicians: Telemedicine physicians are licensed medical doctors who provide remote medical consultations, diagnose illnesses and prescribe treatment plans. Telemedicine physicians use video conferencing, text messages and other digital platforms to communicate with patients. These professionals not only increase access to healthcare in remote areas but also offer convenience to patients who may have difficulty visiting a physical healthcare facility.

Telehealth nurses: Nurses play a crucial role in telemedicine, providing support for patients and assisting with virtual consultations. Telehealth nurses help patients manage chronic conditions, administer remote monitoring devices and offer guidance on self-care. Their expertise contributes to more holistic and comprehensive care.

Telepharmacists: Telepharmacists are pharmacists who provide medication-related services through remote consultations. They offer medication therapy management, prescription reviews and medication counseling *via* video

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calls or online chats. Telepharmacists ensure that patients receive accurate information and can manage their medications effectively.

AI-Assisted healthcare professionals

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is playing an increasingly significant role in healthcare. AI-assisted healthcare professionals, often working alongside human practitioners, enhance diagnostic accuracy, streamline administrative tasks and improve patient outcomes. These AI technologies are becoming integral members of the healthcare workforce.

AI diagnostic tools: AI diagnostic tools, such as machine learning algorithms and image recognition software, can analyze medical images, pathology slides and patient data to assist in the early detection of diseases. These tools help healthcare professionals make more accurate diagnoses and treatment recommendations.

Chatbots and virtual health assistants: Chatbots and virtual health assistants are AI-driven applications that interact with patients to gather medical history, answer questions and provide basic health information. They help streamline administrative tasks, freeing up healthcare professionals to focus on clinical care.

AI-powered Electronic Health Records (EHR): AI-powered Electronic Health Records (EHR) systems are transforming healthcare administration. They can automatically extract and organize patient data, reducing administrative workload and minimizing errors. Electronic Health Records (EHR) allows healthcare providers to spend more time on patient care and less on paperwork.

Community health workers

Community health workers are a vital part of the healthcare workforce, focusing on underserved communities and promoting public health. They often work outside traditional clinical settings and bridge the gap between healthcare institutions and the communities they serve.

Health educators: Community health workers educate individuals and communities about healthy behaviors and lifestyle choices. They help people understand the importance of preventive measures and provide information on managing chronic conditions.

Patient navigators: Patient navigators assist individuals in navigating the complex healthcare system. They help patients schedule appointments, access resources and understand their treatment plans. This role is especially important for patients facing language barriers or limited

health literacy.

Home health workers: Home health workers provide essential care to patients in their homes, assisting with activities of daily living and monitoring health conditions. They play a crucial role in supporting individuals who are recovering from illness, managing chronic diseases or/and dealing with disabilities.

The future of health manpower

The integration of new forms of health manpower into the healthcare system is reshaping the way care is delivered and received. As we look to the future, it's clear that these changes will continue to evolve and expand.

Interdisciplinary collaboration: The future of healthcare will see increased collaboration among various professionals, including traditional healthcare providers, telemedicine specialists, AI-assisted professionals and community health workers. This interdisciplinary approach will enhance patient care by addressing medical, social and psychological needs holistically.

Leveraging data and analytics: The use of data and analytics will become more prevalent in healthcare. By collecting and analyzing patient data, healthcare professionals can tailor treatment plans to individual needs, predict disease outbreaks and improve overall healthcare outcomes.

The importance of training and education: The emergence of new forms of health manpower requires ongoing training and education for healthcare professionals. Medical schools and training programs must adapt to include telemedicine, AI and community health work as part of their curricula.

CONCLUSION

The healthcare landscape is evolving rapidly and new forms of health manpower are playing a central role in this transformation. Telemedicine, AI-assisted healthcare professionals and community health workers are expanding access to care, improving patient outcomes and revolutionizing the way healthcare is delivered. As we look to the future, the integration of these new forms of health manpower, along with interdisciplinary collaboration, data-driven healthcare, ongoing education and ethical considerations, will continue to shape the healthcare system, ultimately benefiting both patients and healthcare providers. The healthcare workforce of tomorrow will be a dynamic and diverse group of professionals dedicated to providing high-quality, accessible and patient-centered care.