Artificial Intelligence to Support NHS by Reducing Missed Hospital Appointments

The NHS aims to maximise resources by cutting the number of missed hospital appointments using artificial intelligence to predict the likely missed appointments and offer back-up bookings.

Almost eight million hospital appointments are missed each year which leads to annual cost of 1.2 billion pounds to the NHS.

NHS chief executive Amanda Pritchard said that this new pilot "shows the NHS testing the latest technological advancements to address the real-world challenges we face. The system will help ensure patients receive 'smart' appointments, that are convenient and fit into people's increasingly busy lives".

"It is a win-win for patients and the NHS alike – it will help us to free up doctors' time to treat more patients, save taxpayers' money as well as helping to reduce waiting times".

This software is currently being piloted in Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust, which has an average missed appointment rate of 8%.

The AI technology will look into the reasons why a patient did not attend an appointment - using a range of external insights including the weather, traffic and jobs.

It will then track patients' preferences and offer them appointments they are more likely to attend with 90% accuracy so that less clinical time is lost, maximising efficiency. They are usually re-scheduled for a time in the day that is more convenient for them, such as evening or weekend slots.

The software is created by Deep Medical and co-designed by a frontline worker and NHS clinical fellow. When scaled out, it is estimated that it will allow an additional 80-100,000 patients to be seen each year at the trust.

Pioneering approaches like this will help to free up the time of NHS clinicians, and help to boost the NHS efforts to improve waiting lists so patients can receive the healthcare they need more quickly.

Source: NHS

Image Source: iStock

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