Cloud Based Solution Reduces Referrals

Cloud-based technology has reduced referrals by about 50% in a trial held at   Moorfields Eye Hospital in London.

Developed in collaboration with software company Big Picture, the cloud solution aims to assess patient need for a hospital eye service referral remotely. During trials for the technology, around half of initial referrals were found to be unnecessary.

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"This use of telemedicine comes at a time where hospital eye services in the UK face an increasing number of referrals driven by progress in retinal imaging," said Dawn Sim, consultant ophthalmic surgeon and head of telemedicine at Moorfields Eye Hospital. "This platform r**educes unnecessary Ophthalmologist referrals** within the NHS, which is critical as this can overburden the clinical service and increase the time for a patient to be seen and receive treatment."

This cloud based referral platform allows **two-way communications between community optometrists, general practitioners and ophthalmologists.** Both clinical and imaging data is shared with the ophthalmologists in a secure and trusted manner. The ophthalmologists can then remotely triage the patients to which eye care service they require and automatically communicate this information to the patients and their carers.

Through the tech, Ophthalmologists could **prioritise referrals that were more urgent** with patients in need of timely treatment to reduce the likelihood of vision loss.

The result was that 14% of patients reported as needing an urgent referral, were treated in less than four weeks.

"With the progress being made in using machine learning to provide a diagnosis from eye imaging, it may be possible for   artificial intelligence to be integrated into this referral platform in the future," said Sim.

Source: Moorfields

Image credit: iStock

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