
Will HIT Cure Healthcare?



A chief architect of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is sceptical that HIT is going to play the all-encompassing role in healthcare that Silicon Valley envisions.

In a report in [KQED](#), a media outlet in Northern California, Ezekiel Emanuel, M.D., senior fellow for the Center for American Progress and a University of Pennsylvania Professor said that tech will be in the passenger rather than the driving seat.

Emanuel acknowledged that there would be an important role for healthcare technology but, in reference to San Francisco and Silicon Valley "probably not what many of the start-up companies around here are thinking of" he said.

Tech will probably play an augmenting role such as providing better data about patients and healthcare spending so as to ascertain clearly where waste exists.

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But Emanuel expressed scepticism about the idea that computers will replace doctors and interface with patients. "Not going to happen," he said.

An area tipped to transform healthcare is one that Emanuel is especially dubious about; wearable technology. He said the problems was not obtaining information but how it was interpreted and used. This, he added, required human interaction.

Emanuel acknowledged that his opinions are out of step with what he described as the "tech-utopians" in California who regard [mHealth technology](#) as a "cure-all".

Emanuel's stance has been backed by recent studies which show that mHealth apps are not very effective for chronic condition management or vulnerable segments of the patient population. He is also not alone in asking for more evidence for the efficacy of HIT; even some supporters of health technology have asked for increased validity on its use.

Even those that have emerged as proponents of health technology have asked for more validity when it comes to new technology. Recent studies have shown that mHealth apps aren't effective for managing chronic conditions or vulnerable patient populations, and are unlikely to increase physical activity.

Emanuel did acknowledge that his opinions are out of step with what he described as the "tech-utopians" in California who regard health technology as a 'be-all, end-all'.

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