



THE RUSH TO ADOPT AI IN HEALTHCARE

Are providers solving problems or just chasing trends?
Asks Ian Chambers, CEO of Linea

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming healthcare, with hospitals, clinics, and health systems worldwide integrating AI tools to improve patient care, optimise operations, and drive innovation. However, as

organisations rush to adopt AI, a critical question arises: What problem are we trying to solve?

Rather than strategically applying AI to address specific challenges, many providers are investing in AI without a clear

understanding of their needs. This raises concerns about the real value of AI in healthcare and whether it is being utilised effectively to improve patient outcomes and operational efficiency.

The current state of AI in healthcare

AI's presence in healthcare is rapidly expanding, with spending in the sector expected to reach between £80 and £96 billion globally by 2026. The growth is driven by applications such as diagnostics, virtual health assistants, and predictive analytics, which are

transforming the way care is delivered. AI technologies, including machine learning and natural language processing, are helping healthcare providers improve diagnostic accuracy, streamline administrative processes, and predict patient outcomes with greater precision.

Some notable applications include:

- **AI-Driven Diagnostics:** AI tools are used to analyse medical images, such as MRIs, allowing for faster and more accurate diagnoses of conditions like cancer or heart disease.

- **Predictive Analytics for Patient Care:** Hospitals are utilising AI to analyse patient data and predict the likelihood of readmissions or complications, enabling more proactive care.
- **Automating Administrative Processes:** AI is streamlining repetitive tasks like appointment scheduling, and electronic health record (EHR) management.
- **Virtual Health Assistants:** AI-powered chatbots assist patients with symptom checks, medication reminders, and answers to basic health questions.

While these applications highlight AI's potential in healthcare, it's essential to recognise that not all AI solutions are complex or costly. In many cases, off-the-shelf AI products embedded in existing healthcare software can provide substantial benefits with minimal disruption.

The urge to keep up

Despite the promising benefits, the rush to adopt AI is often driven by external pressures. Many healthcare organisations may feel the need to invest in AI simply because competitors are doing so or because AI is a trending topic in industry discussions. The fear of being left behind in the AI race can lead to hasty implementations without a clear strategy, potentially wasting resources and creating unrealistic expectations.

This perception that "AI equals innovation" can push providers to deploy AI in areas where it may not be needed or where simpler, more cost-effective solutions might work better. Competition in the healthcare space is fierce, and while it drives innovation, it's crucial that healthcare organisations focus on thoughtful, strategic AI adoption rather than following trends.

The problem with chasing AI trends in healthcare

Healthcare providers often invest in AI tools before identifying their real problems or assessing whether AI is the best solution. Common pitfalls include:

- **Lack of Clear Objectives:** AI projects are sometimes launched without a defined clinical goal. For example, implementing an AI-powered chatbot in patient services may not improve patient satisfaction if patients prefer speaking with a human for complex medical issues.



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- **Overcomplicating Solutions:** AI can introduce unnecessary complexity into healthcare systems. For example, a hospital may adopt a predictive analytics tool for managing patient flow, but their issues may stem from outdated processes that could be improved without AI.
- **High Costs and Low Return on Investment (ROI):** AI initiatives can be costly to implement and maintain. Without clearly defined ROI metrics, these investments may yield minimal improvements. However, there are many examples where AI solutions have shown strong returns. In radiology, for instance, AI tools have greatly improved diagnostic accuracy and efficiency, leading to better patient outcomes and cost savings.
- **Mismatch Between AI Capabilities and Clinical Needs:** Not every healthcare challenge is best addressed by AI. For example, using AI to assist in recruitment for clinical staff may not address underlying issues such as a shortage of trained healthcare professionals, or the need for better hiring practices. That said, AI can streamline recruitment processes by reducing hiring times and improving candidate selection.

The importance of problem identification in healthcare

AI should be viewed as a tool to solve specific healthcare problems, not a blanket solution for improving overall operations. Before adopting AI, organisations should first consider:

- What problem are we trying to solve?
- Do we have sufficient, high-quality data to support an AI-driven solution?



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- Is AI the best tool for addressing this issue, or could other methods be equally or more effective?
- What are the projected costs, and is there a clear potential for ROI?

Answering these questions can help healthcare providers avoid common AI adoption pitfalls and focus on meaningful, high-impact applications that directly improve patient outcomes or operational efficiency.

AI success stories in healthcare: Where AI solved real problems

Despite the challenges, many healthcare organisations have successfully leveraged AI to address critical issues:

- **AI-Driven Diagnostics:** In radiology, AI systems have dramatically improved the speed and accuracy of diagnosing conditions such as lung cancer from CT scans, directly addressing the problem of limited radiologist availability and diagnostic delays.
- **Predictive Analytics in Patient Care:** AI models are being used to predict patient deterioration in intensive care units, allowing for earlier interventions and better outcomes for critically ill patients.
- **Operational Efficiency:** AI-powered tools for resource management have helped optimise bed allocation and staff scheduling, ensuring that hospitals can meet patient demand more efficiently, especially during periods of high strain like flu season or the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, AI has streamlined administrative tasks such as revenue cycle management, delivering significant time and cost savings.

Ethical and practical considerations

As AI becomes more embedded in healthcare, ethical concerns around data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the



risk of over-reliance on technology must be carefully managed. Healthcare organisations should adopt a collaborative approach, engaging IT, clinical, and operational teams to ensure that AI solutions are deployed effectively and ethically.

A strategic path forward for AI in healthcare

AI has the potential to revolutionise healthcare, but only when implemented with clear purpose and strategic focus. For healthcare providers, the lesson is clear: don’t adopt AI just for the sake of AI. Instead, focus on identifying real challenges, such as improving diagnostic accuracy, enhancing patient outcomes, or streamlining administrative processes. Continuous evaluation and adjustment are also critical as the healthcare landscape evolves.

In the race to embrace AI, the winners will be those who take a thoughtful, problem-focused approach. Those who rush to adopt AI without asking “why” risk wasting resources and missing real opportunities for improvement.

How we can help

Linea specialises in helping healthcare organisations navigate the complexities of operational efficiency. We understand that AI isn’t always the best solution for every challenge. Our approach starts with a thorough assessment of your organisation’s needs, ensuring that technology is used strategically to address real problems, not just trends. If AI is the right tool, we’ll help you implement it effectively. If a simpler or more cost-effective solution exists, we’ll recommend that path to ensure your investments are aligned with clear objectives and measurable outcomes. As a government-approved supplier, we provide trusted, reliable services tailored to your organisation’s needs.

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