



Why innovation in healthcare is crucial to patient well-being

For the past 2,400 years, since the time of Hippocrates, healthcare has been about the balance between the science of medicine and the art of medicine. The art being the empathy expressed from a caregiver to a patient.

This year, Cleveland Clinic celebrates its 100th anniversary. Over the past century healthcare innovation has driven extraordinary breakthroughs in patient care, helping to save many millions of lives globally. As we look forward to the next 100 years, we will see the growing power of the science allowing more time to focus on empathy.

From pioneering heart treatments back in the 1950s, to recent breakthroughs in face and uterus transplant surgery, those at the forefront of medical innovation have often looked to technology to enable this. Empathy should be at the core of that drive to innovate, as we look to help patients with the most complex medical needs, so the science and art work together to provide the best care.

Some of these innovations in care are aided by specific tools: the use of robots in surgery, for example. However, there is a much wider role that technology can play in safety, quality and clinical transparency, enabling the collection of data to help guide and determine the most

appropriate course of treatment.

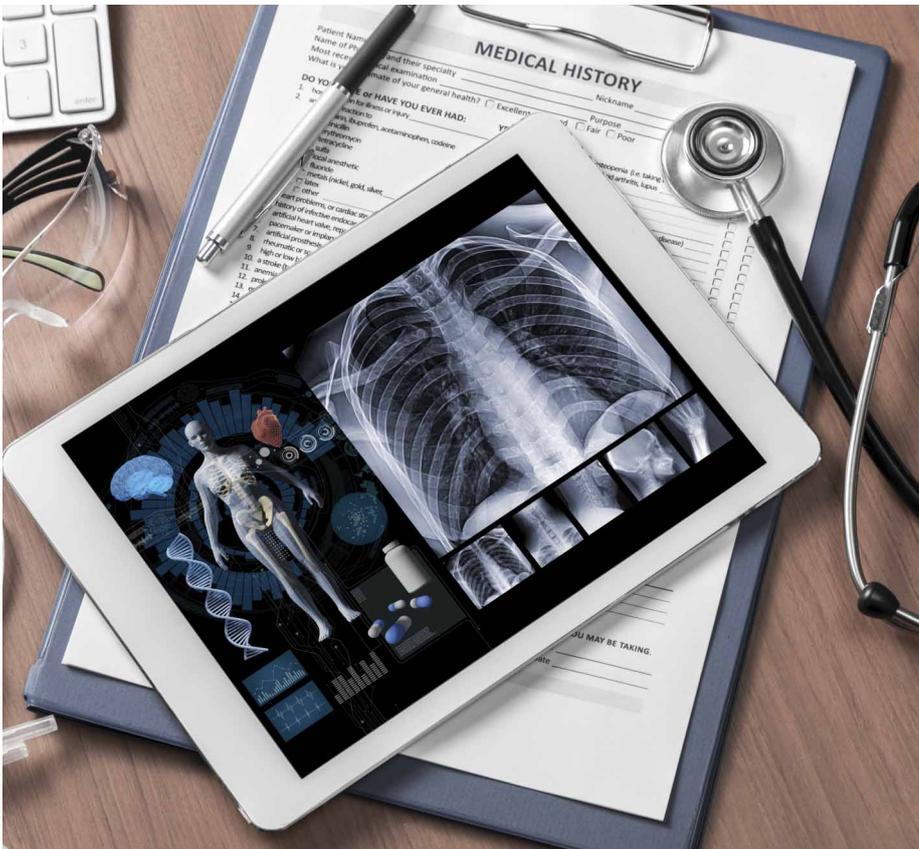
Cleveland Clinic London welcomes our first patients this year, and it's incredibly exciting to be opening in a city with a tradition of healthcare research and innovation going back many years. Medical training through the UK's top universities and NHS teaching hospitals is second to none and many London doctors are global leaders in their fields of expertise. There is an unparalleled focus on patient care here, and one area where innovation is greatly improving delivery of care is through digitisation of systems and processes.

Hospitals have long been paper-based, with inevitable delays in getting clinical information, such as test results, to frontline caregivers. Electronic medical records (EMR), combined with devices and apps for medics to access test results and other clinical information in real-time at the bedside, can increase clinical quality and put the patient at the centre of decision-making.

Integrated technological developments like EMR free up caregivers from the burden of data collection and allow them to be the person that interprets the data and counsels the patient directly. We will see a more personalised, empathetic approach that will allow for better care for

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all. And by training future doctors and nurses with these leading-edge tools alongside the crucial focus on empathy, we can expand the skills of clinical teams of the future to deliver better care.

This move to digital is also hugely convenient for patients, who have instant access to their medical data via an app. People have become used to technology-enabled and transparent customer service in their daily activities, and they expect the same of their medical experiences. Patient apps can give access to test results, prescription refills, follow up appointments, payment and medical information.

Some may worry that technology is used to replace the doctor, but it can do the opposite. Technology can move patients and doctors to where they need to be quicker – it’s an enabler, not a barrier. Technology can also greatly improve safety. A unit-dose pharmacy robot, for example, individually wraps and tracks medication by bar code to the patient’s bedside, reducing the potential for human error.

Another area where technology can be hugely beneficial to both patients and caregivers is virtual medicine. Offering virtual consultations with world-leading specialists here in London opens health-care services up to a global audience. Of course, there’s a limit to the virtual approach when it comes to treatment, but combining an initial virtual appointment with a global hospital network and the instant, global access of electronic records offers incredible flexibility for the patient.

In many ways, the future of healthcare will see a return to the strengths of the older versions of medicine, with providers attending to patients in their homes, albeit virtually, and following them throughout their lives. This will enable personalised and equitable care, while always being there for the individual at their time of greatest need for empathy.



Brian Donley is the CEO of Cleveland Clinic London. Cleveland Clinic London will welcome its first patients at the outpatient centre at 24 Portland Place, a five minutes’ walk from Oxford Circus, in September. The hospital will open in Belgravia early next year and a second outpatient centre will follow thereafter. Visit www.clevelandcliniclondon.uk.

