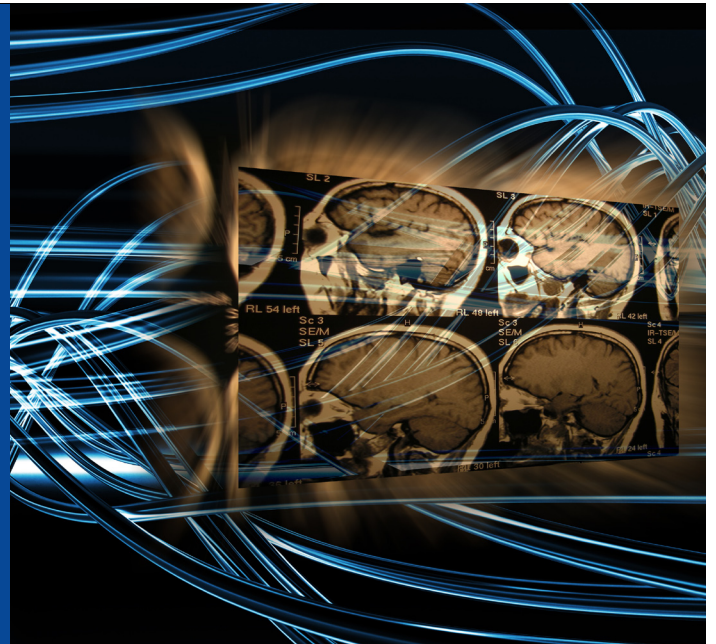


How technology is improving the healthcare industry



Businesses today strive to outdo the competition by extending newer products and even better solutions to their customers. Such increased competition means that businesses need to look beyond themselves for more effective solutions and explore new opportunities to increase their margins in the long run.

Industry transformation can impact businesses positively – but only if these businesses can quickly adapt to the new technology and adjust to the trends. Businesses in the same industry can collaborate among themselves to improve and enhance business processes, either through shared services, supply chain integration or business process re-engineering.

Here's a showcase of how infocomm technology has transformed the healthcare industry and impacted the way healthcare professionals do a better job as well as empower patients to make a better decisions about their choices.

Healthcare service providers are being tested to the limit. There is constant pressure to cut costs, increase efficiency and improve the quality of patient care. Hospitals are facing up to other tough challenges such as increased demand for services from an ageing population, higher rate of chronic illnesses and the constant march of modern technological and medical advances.

In the effort to transform this service, SME general practitioner (GP) clinics also need to ensure that they are able to rise to the global challenges. This can only be achieved if they modernise and change, and create a safe and secure infrastructure around which they can deliver the benefits of real change to the patients they serve.

Infocomm provides opportunities for SME GP clinics to support real transformation to improve the quality and safety of care for patients. The benefits that SME GP clinics can reap are tremendous, as staff and clinicians are assisted with optimal healthcare delivery, which is safe, cost-effective, efficient and timely.

A seamless and efficient clinical and administrative function

Computerised systems enable the staff to expedite their core clinic functions and administrative management of patients. Computerised billing, appointment scheduling and inventory management can be

better managed by clinics. This provides a complete and seamless patient-centric system that will result in improved patient care, reduced waiting times and improved levels of service.

Real-time availability and sharing of information

Few healthcare professionals use infocomm such as electronic medical records, which can be easily shared between patients' treating physicians and clinical decision support systems. Patients can receive treatment from different healthcare professionals and GPs, who may be based at different locations.

By enabling information to be linked electronically, staff caring for the patient will have secure access to accurate, up-to-date patient information 24 hours a day, seven days a week improving diagnosis and care. The patients' information will 'follow' them as they receive treatment, rather than being stuck in a filing cabinet or on a particular computer or clinic and hospital. This should end the paper chase between GPs, hospitals and departments, resulting in fewer lost records and test results. Similarly, digital x-rays and scans enable a second opinion to be given electronically, in real time, by a specialist in a different location.

Improved appointment and booking scheduling

The benefit that patients can reap is not merely limited to booking appointments only, but it can give an increased choice and convenience for patient according to their own priorities – whether they require a first outpatient referral or fitting their appointment around their family and work commitments.. It also makes it easier for patients in obtaining their repeat prescriptions, and have them sent electronically from the prescriber to the pharmacy or medicine collection area. And, by improving patients' access to their information, they will be assisted in making more informed decisions about their care.

Supporting IT for healthcare practitioners to be more patient-centric

Patients' needs and expectations are changing, with the desire for timely access to high quality services. Diverse communities require more responsive healthcare services and better integration with social care services. By leveraging on infocomm, healthcare practitioners are able to make care more patient-centred, where information can be tailored according to a patient's characteristics, genetic makeup and specific conditions.