

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Preamble

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the use of computers to think and learn like humans by looking at information, finding patterns and helping to make decisions. It's being used more in healthcare to help with things like analyzing symptoms, patient history and test or imaging results, supporting physicians in making informed decisions and giving them more time to care for their patients. AI can help make care more efficient, but it's still being improved to make sure it's safe, correct and keeps patient information secure and private.

This document answers common questions about AI in healthcare, explains the pros and cons of using AI and shares what you should know if AI is used in your care. Talk to your physician if you have questions or concerns about AI being used in your care.

How is AI used in healthcare?

Physicians can use AI computer programs that are trained to find patterns in large amounts of health information. AI can learn from this information to help physicians make decisions.

However, AI doesn't replace healthcare providers – it's a tool to help them give better care. Healthcare providers are still responsible for your care.

Are there laws for AI use?

AI is not currently regulated in Canada, but organizations like CPSA and the Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner of Alberta (OIPC) are working to make sure AI is used in a way that protects patients and supports good care by providing resources on how to safely use AI and protect patient privacy.

What are the benefits of using AI?

AI can give physicians more time to see patients by helping with paperwork and other administrative tasks and by assisting them in narrowing down potential diagnoses. It can make it easier for patients in remote areas or those using virtual platforms to access the care and resources they need. It can also help triage patients based on how urgent their medical needs are to help reduce wait times.

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What are the risks of using AI?

AI can sometimes be wrong or miss important details; for example, it may not work the same for everyone, especially if it didn't learn with diverse information. Patient privacy must also be protected when using AI tools.

Can AI make mistakes?

Yes. AI can be wrong because it learns from large amounts of data, and if that data has gaps, errors or bias, it can lead to mistakes. Other factors, like the design of the AI system, how it's used and how well it fits the situation can also affect the accuracy of the AI tool.

This is why physicians have to be careful and double-check anything AI writes or suggests before giving you advice or including it on your chart. They also need to note in your chart when AI has been used. AI is a tool to help physicians, not replace their training, experience or medical knowledge.

Can AI be biased?

Yes, AI can be biased sometimes. It learns from large amounts of medical information, but the information might not include all types of people or situations. This means AI may not always work the same for everyone, and information from AI models may not apply to all populations equally. That's why physicians need to check AI's results very carefully to make sure all patients get proper care.

Can AI replace my physician?

No. AI is a tool to help physicians provide care: your physician is still responsible for your care. They have to use their training, experience and medical knowledge to give you advice and make decisions, with help from AI when needed.

How would my physician use AI?

Some ways your physician could use AI could include:

- writing notes for your chart;
- looking at and helping understand things like X-rays or MRIs;
- finding possible health issues based on your information and history; or
- helping provide possible treatment options based on your personal health needs and goals.

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Physicians must still use their training, experience and medical knowledge, not just use AI to make decisions

Does my physician need my consent to use AI?

Yes. If AI is used to record your appointment or make notes in your chart, your physician needs to ask for your consent.

You have the right to ask how AI will be used and to say no if you don't want your physician using AI for your care.

You can also take your consent back if you change your mind at any time in the future.

Can I opt out of AI being used in my care?

Yes. You can opt out if you have concerns about your physician using AI in your care.

You could talk to them if you have questions or concerns, and they should explain how they are using AI and make sure to follow what you're comfortable with.

Can I withdraw my consent at any point?

Yes, you can withdraw consent for the use of AI in your care at any time. If you no longer want AI tools to be used, talk to your physician. They will respect your choice and ensure that AI is not used again unless you give permission.

If AI was already used during a past visit, that information becomes part of your medical record and cannot be removed. Medical records have to reflect what happened during your care. You can request changes or corrections to your record, but your physician can only add a note to the original entry, not delete or remove it based on provincial legislation.

It's also important to know that if your health information was used to train an AI system, especially one owned by a third party, it may not be possible to remove your data from that system. This is why it's important to understand how your information might be used before giving consent.

Is my privacy protected?

Protecting patient privacy is a top priority. Physicians must make sure AI follows privacy rules set by provincial and federal legislation and that notes or records made by AI are double-checked to make sure they are correct before being added to your chart.

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If AI is used, your physician needs to explain how your personal health information is being kept safe.

Will my medical records show if AI was used in my care?

Yes. Your physician should note in your chart if AI was used to help with notes or making decisions. This helps keep things clear and makes it easier to correct any mistakes if they occur.

What should I do if I have concerns about AI being used in my care?

Talk to your physician. Let them know what is worrying you and ask them questions. Remember, you can opt out of AI being used when your physician is providing you with care or take back consent if you want your physician to stop using AI, even if you already said yes.

Questions?

If you still have questions or concerns, you can talk to a member of our Customer Experience Team by calling 1-800-561-3899 or emailing support@cpsa.ca.