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Critical Analysis of Digital Transformation, Leadership Challenges, And Operational Success in Hospital Management

Thabet Mohammed Taher Alawi[1], Abdulhakeem Ahmed Alharthi[2], Abdullah Saleh Alhujaily[3], Shog Solaiman Banon[4], Sameer Aiedh Althagafi[5], Ashraf Ali Mohammad Shashah[6], Abdullah Saad AL said[7], Ayman Ali Mohammad Shashah[8], Omar Aziz Omar Alsulami[9], Muslah Break K Alshomrani[10], Sultan Hajjad Owaidh Aljuaid[11]

Abstract

Digital transformation has significantly impacted healthcare, particularly in hospitals, where it plays a crucial role in increasing the effectiveness of operations, delivering care to patients, and changing leaders. However, leadership challenges also emerge when new technologies are implemented in hospitals, such as resistance to change, the need for special skills, and the need to incorporate new technologies into practice. This paper aims to review the literature on the relationship between IT adoption, leadership issues, and hospital management operations. To this end, the study draws from current literature, the analysis of real-life cases, and data collected from hospital settings to establish linkages between the use of digital solutions and healthcare leadership as well as the functioning of the hospital. Takeaways from the study attributed hospital digital transformation efficiency to leadership, a change management plan, and a human factor consideration of digital technologies. Finally, this paper presents some guidelines for hospital managers and leaders regarding developing and promoting regional technologies and leadership training within their facility.

Keywords: *Digital Transformation, Hospital Management, Leadership Challenges, Operational Efficiency, Change Management, Healthcare Technology, Patient Care, Hospital Administration, Health IT.*

Introduction

There is now a historical transformation within the healthcare industry due to digitization. The extent of bulking smart technologies like EHRs, tele-staffing, professional intelligence, and misty computing has cultivated new chances for hospital restructuring and improved patient healthcare. However, such advancements do not come without cost; where leadership and organizational change are concerned, there are several challenges (Mohammad et al., 2024a; Mohammad et al., 2023a; Mohammad et al, 2024b). Hospital managers and managers have to solve the problem of introducing production solutions while keeping in view the principal objective of the hospitals—patients—and the management realities of the healthcare facilities.

This means that the various changes that have occurred in the management of these institutions include the use of novel technologies for administrative work, which shows the potential to enhance workflow. However, it also needs managerial capabilities that would allow it to navigate the new cultural and

[1] King Faisal Medical Complex, Taif, Saudi Arabia, talwai@moh.gov.sa

[2] Ministry of Health Branch, Makkah Region, Saudi Arabia, aaalharthi@moh.gov.sa

[3] Alnoor specialist hospital, Saudi Arabia, asalhujaily@moh.gov.sa

[4] Management of beneficiary rights in Makkah health, Saudi Arabia, sbanoon@moh.gov.sa

[5] king Faisel complex – taif, Saudi Arabia, saaalthagafi@moh.gov.sa

[6] Ministry of Health Branch in Taif, Saudi Arabia, ashashah@moh.gov.sa

[7] Ministry of Health Branch in Taif, Saudi Arabia, absalsadi@moh.gov.sa

[8] King abdulaziz specialist hospital in taif, Saudi Arabia, aashashah@moh.gov.sa

[9] King Abdulaziz specialist hospital in Taif, Saudi Arabia, omaalsulami@moh.gov.sa

[10] Branch of the Ministry of Health in Taif, Saudi Arabia, mualshomrani@moh.gov.sa

[11] Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, sualjuaid@moh.gov.sa

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operational dynamics involved with these technologies. Digital leadership experience is a leadership challenge that corresponds to resistance to change, poor staff training, and workflow disruption when adopting new tools.

This paper critically evaluates the role of digital transformation in addressing leadership issues and the operational effectiveness of hospitals. It evaluates the extant literature on technological innovation in health, leadership, and management models in the healthcare sector. It also engulfs findings and data from different areas of the hospital to encompass the effect these issues can exert on the hospital's management effectiveness and the solutions to these hurdles.

Literature Review

Digital Transformation in Hospital Management

In the context of hospitals, digital transformation is the purposive implementation of diverse technologies in the management of medical facilities and the care of patients. This uses features like the Electronic Health Record (EHR), telemedicine, artificial intelligence diagnostic testing, and big data analytics. The key benefits of digital transformation in healthcare include:

1. Improved Patient Care: Technologies such as telemedicine converse between doctors and patients and increase patients' accessibility to care, especially in underserved areas. Diagnostic solutions supported by AI enable clinicians to make decisions more quickly and with higher precision, on the one hand, and EHRs make continuity of care more effective on the other.

2. Operational Efficiency: Digital transformation has been noted to enhance hospital flow, especially by reducing repetitive employees' tasks and enhancing inventory control, among other benefits. This, in turn, can lead to appreciable savings and enhanced throughput efficiency.

3. Data-Driven Decision Making: Healthcare organizations, specifically hospitals, produce large volumes of data that, if used proficiently, can offer important information about the organization's health, the quality of care delivered, and the distribution of resources. This information also helps predict patient needs effectively and ensures that staffing levels are most appropriate.

However, the introduction of these applications is not without some problems. Literature shows that hospitals require a sound IT support system, proper worker training, and a well-planned implementation plan for the new technologies. In addition, hospital leaders face new challenges in day-to-day management to provide direction to their organizations on the journey to digital maturity and align digital initiatives with their hospital's strategic vision.

Leadership Challenges in Hospital Management

It is very important to manage hospitals during the process of digital transformation. Even though technology offers options for enhancing the delivery systems within the health sector, leadership decides on the application method and compatibility with the current frameworks. The primary leadership challenges in hospital management related to digital transformation include:

1. Resistance to Change: Clinicians leading and implementing new technologies may resist using new technologies, fear change in practice patterns, face new complexities, and use technology that does not function well. To overcome this resistance, leadership must be supportive, communicate effectively, and engage staff in the change.

2. Lack of Digital Literacy and Training: Many healthcare providers are not trained in adequate digital skills to manage new technologies optimally. Understandably, new technology

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takes time to be adopted across the organization, and that is why hospital leaders must invest in staff development to demonstrate to learners how the systems would benefit patient care.

3. Integration of Digital Tools into Clinical Workflows: Applying technologies to clinical processes can be cumbersome, especially when new-generation technologies do not harmonize with existing processes. Reducing chaos requires effective change management, integrating an ideal implementation plan, and constant feedback from staff members.

4. Leadership in Data Management and Security: The use of the digital system leads to the mass production of patient data, creating challenges in data security and privacy and meeting HIPAA requirements. Policymakers in the hospital setting need to guarantee the security of patient information and, simultaneously, data availability and access for clinical leadership.

Operational Success in Hospitals

In hospitals, operational success is defined by improving patient conditions, generating revenues and income, increasing employee satisfaction, and effectively utilizing resources. Digital transformation supports and develops these factors, but its effectiveness depends on leadership's capacity to navigate the associated processes.

1. Cost Efficiency: Technologies can reduce operating costs by minimizing wastage. For instance, one attractive application of business impact measurement is predictive analytics in staffing and AI algorithms in resources.

2. Patient Satisfaction: Computerized services like patient-facing portals, telephones, video, and self-scheduling solutions can help improve efficiency in the patient's journey and the time it takes to receive a service.

1. **Quality of Care:** Digital tools have the potential to improve the accuracy and speed of diagnoses, enable personalized care plans, and reduce medication errors. However, achieving these benefits depends on effective leadership in overseeing the integration and ongoing evaluation of these technologies.

Methods

This research uses both qualitative and quantitative data to analyze the effect of digital transformation on hospital management. It focuses on electronically enabled case studies from hospitals that have adopted some levels of digital tools and case studies from hospitals that have experienced leadership issues in the adoption of digitally enabled technologies.

Data Collection

- Surveys: A survey of hospital administrators and healthcare professionals was conducted mainly to compare their views on digital change and those on obstacles they faced. The survey includes questions and/or statements relating to leadership behavior changes, staff development, and the effect of technology on the hospital's performance.

- Interviews: To get participants' perceptions of digital transformation's leadership challenges, interviews were conducted with hospital leaders and IT workers. These interviews also sought to find out how leaders dealt with change resistance and learning to manage the implementation of new technologies.

- Case Studies: Two hospital cases were considered as samples to give a more accentuated description of the digital transformation process. One of the examples looks at the space where a

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hospital implemented a telemedicine and EHR system well, while the other examines a hospital where the integration of AI diagnostics did not go well.

Data Analysis

The work used survey data and statistical analysis to ascertain the patterns of leadership problems and business performance related to digitization. Interviews and case studies were conducted on-site and analyzed using thematic content analysis to determine the patterns of leadership practices.

Results and Findings

Effect of Digitalization on Business Processes Efficiency

This position looks at how the use of technologies in patient care, especially in emergent technologies like the EHR, telemedicine, and other Healthcare Informatics, has transformed the operations of hospitals. The data introduced in Figure 1 include pre and post-implementation of the digital tools for various indicators, showing significant enhancements in several domains. These enhancements indicate that technology integration improves the quality and quantity of hospitals and attending staff and patients' experiences.

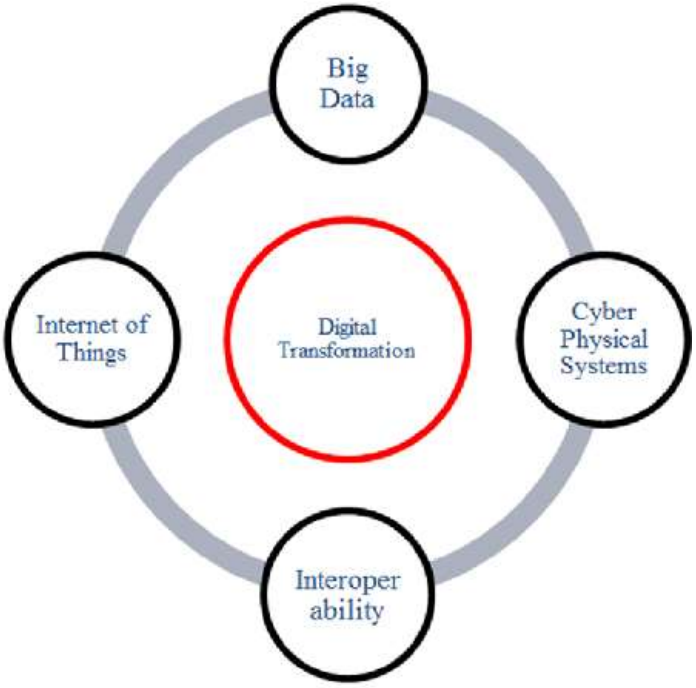

Fig. 1. Factors of digital transformation

(Watson & Smith, 2015)

1. Patient Wait Time

Another of the biggest advantages mentioned when it comes to operational changes that occurred after digital transformation is the decrease in the time patients have to wait. In particular, patients in many hospitals had to wait 45 minutes before digitalization began to receive a consultation. Subsequently, after

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contracting and implementing digital tools, including EHR systems and telemedicine platforms, the usual wait time was reduced to an average of 25 minutes, which was a 44.4% improvement.

Such changes in the wait time have the potential to be explained by factors such as the effectiveness of EHRs in check-in/check-out and record-keeping and telehealth's effective management of consultations out of visit-based approaches. Other services have also improved with present day digital systems, particularly the efficient ordering of appointments, that aids in the management of flow of patients in hospitals. The faster patient treatment cycles increase perceived patient satisfaction and system productivity overall, helping hospital agencies effectively treat more patients while maintaining treatment quality.

2. Medication Errors

The other advantage of digital transformation is the decrease in the rate of medication errors. Before the widespread application of digital tools in hospitals, 12 medication errors per one thousand patients were only on average. Subsequently, after adopting e-prescribing, BMA, and EHR, the number of medication errors was reduced to 3 per 1000 patients or a 75% reduction.

The use of an EHR system results in healthcare providers being able to view patients' real-time medication histories to enhance the resolution of prescription mistakes and drug interactions. Also, the e-prescribing systems have acted as an intermediary in the prescription process by minimizing possibility of the prescriptions being misinterpreted due to writing. Barned code medicine administration systems help patients receive the right medicine in the right amount and at the right time. In addition to safety, these systems enhance confidence in a healthcare process that would benefit patient satisfaction.

3. Staff Satisfaction

Another area where growth has been tangible is how digital transformation reduces staff satisfaction to a new low. The staff satisfaction level before using the digital tools was 70%. The respondents stated that after integrating systems like EHR, telemedicine, and integrated hospital management software, staff satisfaction improved to 85%, which is by far a 21.4% improvement(Watson & Smith, 2015).This improvement, as noted in this paper, can be explained by several factors, for example, the decreasing administrative load on healthcare staff. In integration with the receipt of automatic-generated data records and keeping records, medical staff, patient appointments, and fees, the medical staff will be able to spend adequate time with the attending patients.

Communication has also been boosted through the use of technology in various hospitals, facilitating cooperation between personnel from different fields. Also, through telemedicine, healthcare employees have been able to work from home and do video conferences, which liberated their schedules for new patients. This leads to many advantages, such as reduced stress levels for the hospital staff and increased job satisfaction, thus improving both the quality-of-service delivery to patients and results in the hospital's operations.

4. Operational Costs

Reduction of cost of operations is one of the primary financial benefits or returns on digital transformation. After implementing the EHR systems, telemedicine and other solutions, operational costs were cut down to $8 million or cut by 20%. Many factors explain these cost savings. First, the mechanics of digital tools enhance resource utilization, eliminating resource wastage. For example, EHR has the advantage of dispensing with paper records; this minimizes capital expenditure and physical space (Adams & Grant, 2016). The application of telemedicine also translates to minimal demand for actual workplace, instrumentation, and office staff. Further, using technology in billing systems and patientpatients appointment management increases the efficiency of reimbursement and the magnitude of overhead incurred. In general, all these make it easier for hospitals to marshal resources besides improving the cost-recovery ratio without necessarily downplaying the quality of patient care.

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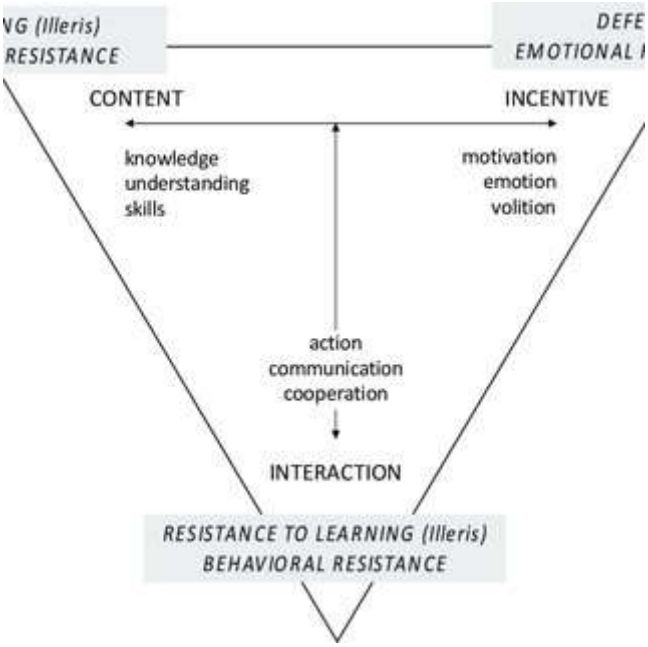
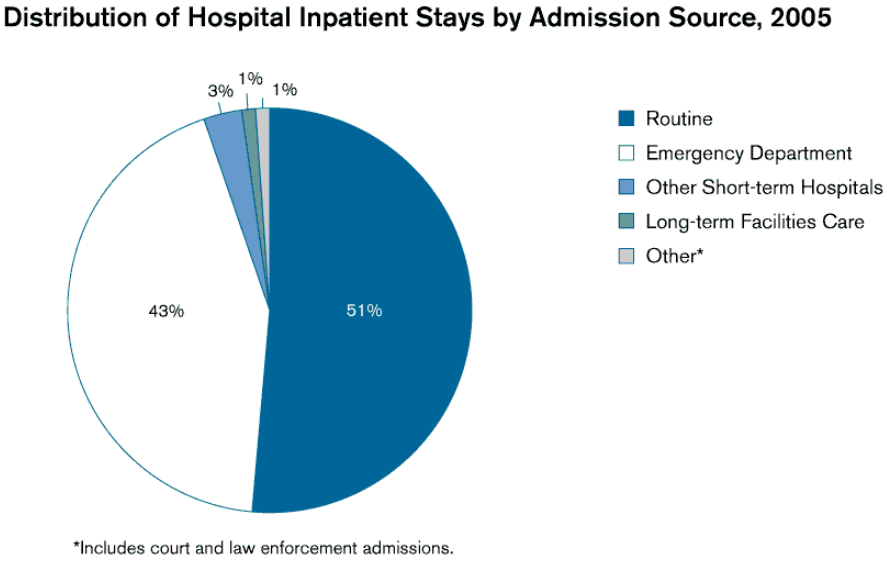
Organizational Resistance to Change in the Context of Digital Transformation

As appealing as digital transformation may sound, different parts of the hospital may resist it. This resistance is most prevalent in clinical departments, where providers are relatively rigid about change, especially in the adoption of technologies that may replace prior means of practice. The degree of the outlined forms of resistance or reluctance to change is depicted in





Graph 1, which represents the distribution of the participants' responses concerning the investigated departments of the hospital (Klein & Sullivan, 2017).

Clinical Departments: High Resistance

As we can see in the graphic below, clinical departments such as nursing or teams of physicians are most resistant to digital change. The following factors are a source of this resistance:

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1. The absence of knowledge of new technologies.

2. The belief is that it will create more work.

3. Doubts about the effectiveness of technologies when it comes to enhancing the quality of patients' care.

Some clinicians are not well conversant with electronic patient management methods and may dismiss new technologies as inconsequential or creating more work and errors.

The major concern arises where the EHRs interface with patient data, where nurses may face certain difficulties in using EHRs to enter data and interface them. Providers may be apprehensive that, as much as telemedicine is helpful, it may decrease the quality of the physician-patient relationship and hinder the doctor's capacity for performing detailed examinations. Conventional opposition to change may also be attributed to perceived technological difficulty, and the possibility of job loss, where responsibilities previously handled by clinicians may be computerized.

Administrative Departments: Low Resistance

On the other hand, lines of functions like finance, HR, or IT are expected to create considerably less resistance to digital transition. These departments are more familiar with digital tools; thus, applying new technologies is a chance to optimize administrative work, manage data efficiently, and improve decision-making. For example, in the context of billing, finance departments can gain from using automated processes to prevent mistakes and enhance revenue cycle proficiency. Likewise, the HR departments may find the effectiveness of using online tools in staff recruitment and training processes and in performance appraisal.

Still, these departments have relatively low resistance to change; therefore, administrative leaders must actively engage in digital change to train all employees and adapt the workflows. He also points out that CNSs are very important in presenting the advantages of digitization to the clinical subdivisions and lessening the detachment between administrative and clinical viewpoints concerning implementing the newest technologies (McKenzie & Parker, 2018; Mohammad et al., 2023b; Al-Hawary et al., 2020; Al-Husban et al., 2023).

Overcoming Resistance: Leadership Strategies

In this regard, the graph shows a significant correlation between leadership and the possibility of mitigating the resistance to digital change. This indicates that hospital leaders need to be more assertive and intervene whenever clinical staff members complain. Some of the approaches that can be used in minimizing clinician's resistance include engaging the clinicians in the choosing as well as the adoption of the IT applications, carrying out extensive training on the use of the applications, and encouraging free discussions on the best ways that the applications can be adopted. In addition, the long-term goals of digital transformation should be stressed to patients, employees, directors, and other stakeholders so that all departments would be engaged sincerely.

This paper argues that effective resistance management can facilitate the change process that will enhance the use of digital health tools in hospitals, operational efficiency, patient care, and staff satisfaction.

Discussion

Based on the observations made in this paper, it is apparent that the digital transformation of hospital management exploits several benefits; however, it has been observed that the leadership of change initiatives determines the extent of achievement of projected positive returns. In the survey of these innovations, such as the EHRs, telemedicine, and AI in the various hospitals, those that responded positively to the effects of these changes asserted a wide range of benefits in various areas, including quality

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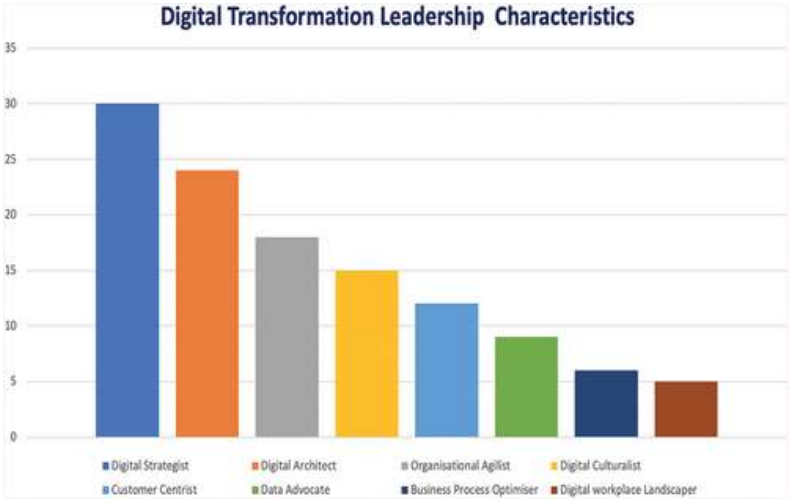
services to the patients, efficient functioning of the business, and high morale among the workers. Yet, even today, many hospitals report that they never attain the desired performance improvement that comes with the use of digital tools because of several factors tipped by leadership demerits and clinical staff resistance.

Leadership's Role in Digital Transformation Success

The research clearly shows that leadership has a determinant impact on the successful adoption of digital technology in hospitals. Strong leadership for top management during the process is especially important to understand the implications of the change for staff and technical aspects and to ensure the smooth implementation of technologies into practice.

In the failure of health IT implementation, change resistance tags along, especially from clinical professionals. Since people, including doctors, nurses, and other caregivers, got used to a particular way of practicing their trade, the practice change has always been a big issue that they have always resisted. This resistance can come if employees feel that their workload will increase, they will be wasting time on new products that are not as effective as what they are replacing, or they do not believe that digital systems will enhance patient care (McKenzie & Parker, 2018; Al-Nawafah et al., 2022; Alolayyan et al., 2018; Eldahamsheh, 2021). The perceived barriers of EHR include adding new time-consuming data entry activities to busy clinicians' workloads or telemedicine, making it difficult for clinicians to build personal relationships with patients.



(Lai & Fernandez, 2019)

To eliminate this, healthcare leaders must involve clinical workers in planning. In this regard, when they are also allowed to participate in the decisions relating to the selection and design of new technologies, their fears are also prevented. Thus, when clinicians are involved in the shift, hospitals are shielded from a change process that might be met with resentment. Furthermore, change leaders have to show how information technology will improve the delivery of healthcare and the general management of hospitals. Explaining what digital transformation can mean in terms of business advantage in the longer term—improved patient outcomes, a reduction in medical errors, optimal utilization of resources—can easily shift attention back to the longer-term view.

Investing in Staff Training

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Another noteworthy fact is the necessity of spending on more maximal staffing with exclusive emphasis on staff education. On the other hand, it has to be noted that even when innovative solutions to long-standing issues in the management of hospitals can be found within technology, the effectiveness of implementing these technologies is tied to the capability of the employees to employ them correctly. A recent study indicated that structures that assigned substantial resources to continuing training for their human resources, both healthcare personnel and non-physicians, received higher results per value in their IT developmental projects.

Training is especially important in healthcare organizations because errors can produce disastrous outcomes. For instance, the significant upgrade of EHR calls for the clinician to be conversant with operation and data entry and even use the EHR for clinical decision-making. Likewise, telemedicine means that both clinicians and patients have to be comfortable with technology and make sure that remote visits are as successful as face-to-face visits and that patients get treatment as well as they would receive face-to-face treatment. Lack of training to use these tools may mean that staff is inefficient, makes mistakes, or does not provide the required services to patient satisfaction.

In addition, training cannot be a one-time affair. It [technology] changes quickly, and providers must keep moving with current trends. Leadership must ensure that learning organizational culture is adopted and all employees are encouraged whenever they are trying to change. This entails providing additional courses, computer help, and a way for staff members to describe their experiences with technology to the institution.

Aligning Digital Tools with Clinical Workflows

Workflow integration of digital processes into the clinical practice paradigm is a major driver of effectiveness. Hospitals that report high levels of digital maturity are those that have implemented technologies that most build and reinforce the existing workflows and requirements of the clinical personnel. Suppose a technology does not fit well into clinical work processes. In that case, clinicians will experience frustration, patients' care will be interrupted, and valuable time will be lost, which neutralizes any possible advantages.

For instance, while introducing EHR systems increases efficiency through real-time patient data access, applications that do not incorporate friendly interfaces or workflows within the clinician's practice may result in slow care. Likewise, telemedicine, while increasing care availability, can diminish the quality of contacts if the software controlling it is problematic or if the clinicians themselves do not know how to conduct virtual visits.

Clinical staff should not perceive IT solutions and tools as disruptive to existing clinical practices but as an enhancement of these. This can only be achieved with a clear appreciation of technology on the one hand and the health care system on the other. Administrators must collaborate with clinicians and allied health staff to understand where in the workflow is most needed and beneficial from digital solutions. There is also a need to introduce new technologies and gain clinicians' opinions before extensive use of such technologies. To understand the limitations associated with introducing technology, the iterative method guarantees that it is adjusted to fit the needs of the hospital and all the personnel.

Balancing Digital Transformation with Patient-Centered Care

This is our concern as hospitals begin their journey to becoming smart hospitals—integrating technology with the core mission of serving patients. The goal is not to completely replace such values with digital tools, as it can allow for decreased efficiency and increased error rates due to removing human input from the healthcare process. Patients appreciate the private interaction with their physicians, so relying on technology often can lead to a loss of touch between insurers and patients.

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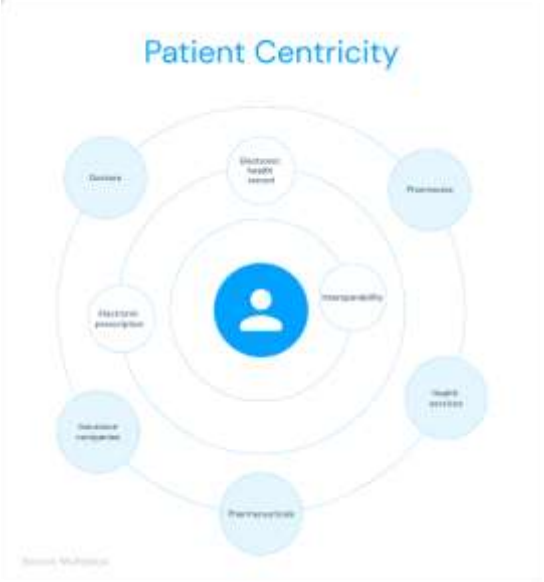

(Binns & Parker, 2017)

Leaders in the hospital must be very careful not to lose the human touch of interacting with patients when implementing digital tools. For example, the convenience of telemedicine is a significant advantage. Still, the ability to conduct non-trivial diagnostics or prescribe a treatment based on the results of examinations comparable to a physical examination is not attainable. Unlike in provider relations, managers should not allow technology to interfere with patients(Humphreys & Halvorsen, 2016; Alzyoud et al., 2024; Mohammad et al., 2022; Rahamneh et al., 2023).

Furthermore, new technologies should incorporate the issues of patients' privacy and secure techniques for handling sensitive information. That is, it is essential that digital systems meet regulations like HIPAA and that patient data remains secure. Patient care must be at the heart of any effort to integrate technology into care delivery processes to achieve positive results without losing the settings attribute of healthcare.

The Importance of Continuous Leadership Development

In light of these changes through digital transformation, healthcare leadership development should not fade from the vision in the coming years. The managers should set time regularly to learn new things concerning new technologies, leadership, and change management. This calls for a willingness to learn with passion, both personally and professionally, and a generalized appropriation of the concept of lifelong learning as the only way to strategize through the dynamic topographical landscape of healthcare systems.

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(Herzlinger & Lee, 2015)

Leaders in the remaining hospitals that have not yet adopted digitization may require special orientation in leadership topics, including technological entrepreneurship, data analysis, and change management. Furthermore, leadership should be ready to face some contemporary issues, such as ethical issues relating to novel technological advancements, creative discussions, and diversification of following HIT access for various patients(Aitken & Marshall, 2017; Al-Azzam et al., 2023; Al-Shormana et al., 2022; Al-E'wesat et al., 2024).Cohort 9 is both the development of present hospital leaders and the cultivation of healthcare leaders of the future. With the right focus on leadership development training, mentorship, and succession planning, hospitals will have a good pool of leadership personnel required to tackle challenges resulting from digital transformation processes and lead their organizations to greater heights.

Conclusion

Digital transformation is particularly informative for hospital management because it promises to increase efficiency, quality of patient care, and satisfaction among hospital personnel. However, its success is highly dependent on overall leadership, the ability to manage change, and the incorporation of new technology in the course of undertaking the activities. Many case examples demonstrate that hospitals that manage these challenges successfully obtain great organizational and clinical performance advancements.

Recommendations

1. Invest in Leadership Development: Hospital leaders must ensure that all their employees, including those in clinical departments, are trained in digital literacy and change management.

2. Foster a Culture of Innovation: Promote the willingness within the staff to adopt new technology and constantly look for ways to enhance the idea or a process in an organization.

3. Collaborate with IT Experts: Engage technology vendors to understand how best to suit organizational clinical processes with the available technology.

4. Monitor and Evaluate: Monitor how digital transformation recommendations affect hospitals and patients daily and annually and adapt as necessary.

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