Times Are Changing

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LAST YEAR AT OUR convention we were able to have a speaker share information about AI in nursing. I think the thing that stood out to me is that this is happening whether we like it or not. So, in turn I believe that we need to take the time to ask questions and understand so that we can be part of the solution to using new technologies.

Nursing, like many other fields, is constantly evolving to adapt to changes in healthcare systems, technology, patient needs, and societal expectations. When we consider how much the population is changing in addition to their needs it is vitally important that we are involved at the front end of this change.

The future of AI in nursing is poised to significantly transform the profession, shifting the focus from tasks to roles and enhancing the overall quality of patient care. Here's how AI might impact nursing in the future:

Shift from Tasks to Roles

AI technologies are expected to take over some of the tasks currently performed by nurses, such as data collection, monitoring, and predictive analytics. However, according to the literature, the need for nurses will not diminish. Instead, nurses will transition into roles that require them to integrate and interpret the information provided by AI technologies. They will become information integrators, health coaches, and the primary deliverers of human care, supported by AI technologies rather than replaced by them.

Changing Roles and Jobs

The integration of AI into healthcare is predicted to lead to a significant workforce transition. While some tasks may be automated, new roles and jobs will emerge. Nurses will need to adapt and train into these new roles, leveraging their existing knowledge and skills alongside the capabilities of AI technologies. This shift will require nurses to grow into roles that involve integrating new technologies and tools, potentially leading to a more specialized and technologically advanced nursing profession.

Ethical Considerations and Accountability

The American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics for Nurses emphasizes that systems and technologies, including AI, are aids rather than replacements for nursing skill and judgment. This underscores the importance of nurses maintaining their critical thinking and decision-making roles, even as they utilize AI technologies. The code also highlights the need for transparency and accountability in the use of AI, including understanding the data used to train AI systems and ensuring that the results are free from bias.

Enhanced Patient Care and Decision-Making

AI technology can provide new insights that support better care decisions. For example, AI tools like KATE and the Rothman Index are being used to enhance patient triage in emergency rooms and detect health conditions in real-time using EHR data. These tools are expected to significantly grow in use as their capabilities are further understood and identified for supporting the delivery of quality nursing and healthcare.

Conclusion

We are faced with changes in how we provide care to our patients which will require changes in our education to provide the care. AI in nursing is another example of the importance for us to be part of the conversation so that we can be involved in the development of technologies and education to assist us in providing care to our patients.

The future of AI in nursing is promising, with the potential to enhance patient care, improve efficiency, and support nurses in their roles. However, it is essential for nurses to adapt to these changes, ensuring that they remain at the forefront of patient care while leveraging AI technologies to support their work. This transition will require a focus on education, ethical considerations, and the development of new roles that integrate AI technologies with nursing skills and judgment. ∎

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