

The employment of AI in medicine: enhancing learning or restricting critical thinking?



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Artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized multiple sectors, and Medicine is no exception. For the last decades, we have witnessed the exponential growth of its use. In the medical area, its implementation has become increasingly common, offering valuable tools that can facilitate student's learning process. However, being part of the early generations of medical students with this technology, we encounter many challenges, and it appears to me that the most outstanding is critical thinking.

The high workload between hospital practice and major courses is a problem that, as students, we face daily leading to mental health concerns and even burnout. As of today, there are numerous strategies to lighten the mental burden, like meditation, psychotherapy, and breathing exercises, among others. But, I consider there is another underexplored one and I'm referring to the assistance that AI could offer.

AI can be a useful resource for a medical student's learning process since it can ease work. This technology becomes helpful with brainstorming, which has a positive impact on creativity evolution, as well as improving different areas such as subject comprehension after class, simplifying the knowledge already given. This support could mark the beginning of a new era in medical training, distinct from previous generations.

Nowadays, AI has been used in diverse medical sectors, proving its high potential. For instance, in the Imagenology field assisted AI diagnosis systems have exhibited notable precision in detecting diseases through image analysis such as cancer. This allows us to see that not only AI can facilitate students' learning process, but it is also capable of becoming vital in patients' attention, improving its quality.

Having an extensive amount of information in just one place can be highly beneficial for studying, allowing students to make the most of the time they have and focus on more relevant topics without the need to memorize huge volumes of information.

Nevertheless, I can not help but feel concerned about how fast AI was integrated as a daily tool for medical students. I believe that, while it could be a fundamental aspect of new ways to develop knowledge, currently medical schools have not been able to adapt and generate adequate training for its use.

The above information would pose an important risk. With so little control over AI, students may end up abusing this tool, eventually losing their critical thinking, which I consider essential in today's doctors. This skill makes doctors capable of analyzing, evaluating situations, and making decisions that could drastically change patients' prognosis.

Despite these problems, I believe AI can be well used and transform itself into a vital tool in patients' health. For instance, it could help with "abstraction", a process that allows isolating a concept and understanding it in a more general way. Doctors could employ it to manage information without memorizing it, empowering the prioritization of relevant data. However, education is needed for correct abstraction practice, revealing AI limits. We must differentiate between the imperative knowledge doctors need for medical practice and knowledge that will impulse innovation in the field.

I hope Mexico's schools of medicine adapt to this new era, incorporating previous education of AI to provide students adequate employment along with ethics, theory, practice, communication, and constant quality improvement.

We are the future and inevitably technology is part of it. Preparing ourselves is our passion and responsibility, the reason we aspire to become a doctor. While recognizing the impact it will have on our lives, we still embrace the challenge. AI practice must not diminish humanistic practice and critical thinking, rather it should enhance them by serving as a resource for clinical judgment and not a replacement.