
IT Training Rises for Healthcare Managers



There has been an increase in specialist training programs for healthcare executives which is primarily driven by the need to hone the digital skill of managers. More and more healthcare organisations are now adapting to technological change and realise that in order to be successful, their strategies need to be shaped by technological advancements that can help reduce patient risk, increase efficiency and slash costs. Healthcare managers need to be skillful enough to keep up with the pace of digital innovation.

As Kimberly MacPherson, associate director of health management at California's Haas School of Business points out, curricula is already changing and healthcare sessions at Haas School on technology are already running electives in their MBA program that cover areas such as tech trends in the biotechnology and pharmaceuticals sectors.

"So much in healthcare revolves around data and information," Kimberly says. "Much of the innovation is reliant on IT and there are huge implementations of EHRs and other core systems, in addition to the digital health explosion."

As technology becomes even more advanced, healthcare executives will need to be in-tune with new mobile apps, wearable tech, sensors and data analytics. They will have to acknowledge the fact that IT will continue to play an important role in healthcare strategy but in order to fully utilise its benefits, managers need to know how to use it. Healthcare managers who remain blind to IT tools that can make the healthcare system more efficient will be at a disadvantage.

Fred Hagigi, professor in technology management and director of Global Health Initiatives at UCLA Anderson School of Management also highlights the fact that new IT tools can have a substantial impact on healthcare.

The Frankfurt School of Finance & Management in Europe is also incorporating innovation management and technological progress into their study. "Healthcare managers are very aware of these developments and observe them closely," says Dr Rainer Sibbel, at Frankfurt's Institute for International Health Management. "But, from a managerial point of view, it is a very difficult and challenging topic." To calculate the cost of investment in tech is easy, but to realize the potential is problematic, he says.

An important aspect of this IT training is a focus on big data. Since machines and devices in hospitals are now transmitting more data than ever before, it is evident that big data will soon become a powerful tool and could revolutionise aspects of patient care and clinical trials. In fact, analytics is quickly becoming a job description for many management roles in healthcare. More and more graduates with digital experience are being hired by the pharmaceutical industry and this trend is expected to continue in the years to come.

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