
£21 Million Allocated for Widespread Roll Out of Artificial Intelligence Across the NHS



The Health and Social Care Secretary has announced a £21 million fund to equip NHS staff with cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) technology for faster patient diagnosis and treatment.

NHS Trusts will be able to apply to the AI Diagnostic Fund to accelerate the implementation of promising AI tools for swift diagnosis of conditions like cancer, strokes, and heart ailments. Additionally, there's a commitment to extending AI stroke-diagnosis technology to all stroke networks, aiding more stroke patients and increasing the coverage from 86% to 100% by the end of 2023.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Steve Barclay, said, "I'm focused on adopting the latest cutting-edge technology across our health and care system to ensure we can continue to deliver the best care for our patients and cut waiting times, which is one of the government's five priorities".

The AI Diagnostic Fund will encompass the use of AI tools to analyse chest X-Rays, a key diagnostic tool for lung cancer, the leading cause of cancer deaths in the UK. With over 600,000 chest X-rays conducted monthly in England, extending diagnostic AI tools to more NHS Trusts will aid clinicians in earlier cancer diagnosis, thereby enhancing patient outcomes.

AI's integration in the NHS is already yielding positive results. In some cases, AI has halved the time required for stroke patients to receive treatment, helping doctors diagnose stroke faster.

AI is a game change for improving diagnosis and accelerating treatments for patients. Encompassing AI decision support software in the early stages of stroke care means interventions are delivered to patients quicker, reducing the risk of disability.

The £21 million funding will be open to applications from NHS trusts interested in deploying AI diagnostic tools, contingent on the requirement that the proposed tools represent value for money to gain funding approval.

The NHS spends £10 billion a year for medical technology and the government has already committed £123 million to support 86 AI technologies that are assisting patients.

Access to new technologies brings substantial benefits to patients, enabling the prevention of illnesses, facilitating earlier diagnoses, enhancing treatment efficacy, and results in faster recovery.

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