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Zoom On: Dr. Mohammad Al-Ubaydli, Founder and CEO Patients Know Best



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Founder and CEO - Patients Know Best

Dr. Mohammad Al-Ubaydli is founder and CEO of Patients Know Best – a UK-based provider of patient-controlled medical records. He trained as a physician at the University of Cambridge, worked as a staff scientist at the National Institute of Health and was a management consultant to US hospitals at The Advisory Board Company. He is the author of seven books focusing on effective management of patient health records and is also an honorary senior research associate at UCL medical school for his research on patient-controlled medical records. In May, Patient Knows Best was the overall winner in the eHealth Competition – the EU-Commission backed award highlighting the best eHealth solutions across Europe. The award was presented during eHealth Week in Riga in May 2015.

1. What are your key areas of interest and research?

Health care IT in general fascinates me. There are so many problems in health care that can be improved with better information technology.

The problem which has obsessed me for the last few years is how to have one record for each patient, controlled by the patient for the patient. Everyone accesses the record because the patient gave them permission to do so. Everyone contributing to the record does so with the patient watching, and eventually with the patient writing as well.

2. What are the major challenges in your field?

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The change from paternalistic medicine to participatory medicine. This is not a technical problem. Everyone – patients, providers, payers – will have to change what they do and why they do it. It is not easy but it is wonderful to witness.

3. What is your top management tip?

I like to find fellow patiently impatient people. People who are impatient with health care's failings, refusing to accept them. But they are also patient enough to stay in the industry to help fix the system. Our customers can tell that our staff are missionaries not mercenaries, this dedication comes across in every interaction our team have with customers.

The best thing I can do as a manager is to find, train and excite such people, they will take care of the customer who will take care of the patient.

4. What would you single out as a career highlight?

Stumbling on a problem I cared so deeply about I could abandon my career and focus all my efforts on solving. The year I spent writing a book about patient portals and the following year I spent thinking about why too few institutions adopted this approach got me hooked on this problem. By the end I had enough belief in its importance to quit my job and commit to helping find the solution. As a result I get to work for some of the most patient-centred institutions in the world. It's a pleasure going to work every day.

5. If you had not chosen this career path what do you think you would have become?

A programmer. Information technology is reforming every industry and every society. With those skills you can be part of the reformation in whichever area you find most interesting.

6. What are your personal interests outside of work?

I am a history buff, reading stories of other people's lives is a great privilege. I am currently reading *Kepler's Witch*. I knew Kepler was an amazing astronomer, but I had not known that his mother was tried for being a witch. The book is about Kepler trying to defend his mother in court.

7. Your favourite quote?

Too many to choose from, but a recent one I got was "We waste too much time being afraid, when what we should really fear is wasting time." from the book *Let IT Go - The Memoirs of Dame Stephanie Shirley*.

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