Family Medicine

BOOK REVIEW

ChatGPT, MD: How AI-Empowered Patients & Doctors Can Take Back Control of American Medicine

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Book Title: ChatGPT, MD: How AI-Empowered Patients & Doctors Can Take Back Control of American Medicine

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Publication Information: Self-published, 2024, 297 pp, $19.95, hardcover

ChatGPT MD is a persuasive, well-written vision of what health care could become if generative artificial intelligence (AI) is embraced and effectively utilized. While Dr Robert Pearl is the lead author, he openly shares authorship with ChatGPT. He seamlessly transitions his commentary to the content from ChatGPT's perspective. Including ChatGPT as a coauthor author highlights both the benefits of generative AI and raises important questions. Can AI be unbiased when writing about its own potential? Dr Pearl addresses this by clearly distinguishing between AI-generated content about future possibilities and current realities.

While much has already been written about AI in health care, Dr Pearl's perspective on this is what makes his particular vision so compelling. He has broad experience in health care leadership, medical education, and clinical care, so he can address and discuss the potential benefits, fears and challenges that will be associated with more extensive incorporation of generative AI in health care.

The book is organized into sections that walk the reader through the history of big technological and medical advances, all of which to varying degrees revolutionized medicine. The text then goes on to explore how generative AI is the next revolutionary advancement. The earlier sections discuss how AI can be a tool to enhance the health care experience for both the patient and the clinician. Later sections dive into ethical and safety considerations and a discussion of how generative AI could change the payment model from the traditional fee-for-service model to a value-based system.

The book share examples of AI's potential in various aspects of health care. For example, in chronic disease management, a generative AI tool could interpret data from wearable devices, provide guidance to patients for changes they could make prior to their next appointment, and alert the physician when data are significantly abnormal. While apps and tools are now widely used to facilitate data collection, the application of generative AI in clinical management remains uncommon in health care. The author hypothesizes that this emerging technology will shape the future of health care and give valuable time and bandwidth back to both physicians and patients.

Combating physician burnout is a common theme that is weaved into many examples of impact and utilization of generative AI. The authors discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuing shift to chronic care that has accelerated burnout. When a generative AI system is connected to the electronic health records (EHR) system for a patient, the generative AI could then analyze those health records, give recommendations on treatments, notify of preventive health screenings which are due, help to schedule them, and even help to arrange transportation. For example, a patient with diabetes who is due for a retinal scan would be notified, scheduled, completed, and resulted in the EHR. The results would be reviewed by generative AI, and if abnormal, then the generative AI would help to schedule the follow-up appointment with the PCP, thus giving the clinician the time

and bandwidth to handle complex cases that necessitate more in-depth clinical attention.

Section 4 of the book, in which the authors specifically address the most common fears associated with giving generative AI a bigger role in health care is particularly enlightening. The book takes a deep dive into these fears: security, privacy, bias, and reliability. The common arguments against utilizing generative AI in health care related to each of these fears are presented and addressed individually.

Overall, Dr Pearl and ChatGPT present an engaging vision of the future of health care that addresses the needs of stakeholders with a focus on the patients' and physicians' needs and desires as they relate to health care. Anyone who interacts with the health care system will appreciate this book. The text can help health care administrators see how generative AI could help optimize operations and reduce inefficiencies. Medical professionals can gain insights into how AI may support clinical decision-making, streamline workflows, and improve diagnostic accuracy. Patients and policy makers will appreciate understanding how this technology could enhance access to care, personalize treatment, and shape future health care policies to ensure ethical and effective implementation. As a physician, I can relate to the challenges, appreciate the potential future and support the central message of the book that "AI's role in health care is not to replace the human touch or clinical expertise but to enhance it" (page 193).