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Smarter, human-centric insurance through collaboration

Speakers at the 20th Asia Conference on Healthcare and Health Insurance discussed how AI is changing health insurance and healthcare by making patient care better, simplifying claims and helping assess risks more accurately.

By Reva Ganesan

Asia's healthcare scene is quickly going digital, and AI is leading the charge – changing how diagnoses are made, improving patient care and reshaping how insurers assess risk.

AI powered predictive analytics and real time health monitoring are paving the way for more personalised, data driven solutions that catch diseases earlier, lower treatment costs and improve outcomes across the region.

Speakers at the 20th Asia Conference on Healthcare and Health Insurance, with a heavy focus on the AI revolution, discussed how health insurance has gone beyond simple automation, AI-driven innovations, regulatory considerations and solutions to augment insurers and the healthcare industry for a more resilient healthcare sector in Asia.

Delivering his welcoming remarks, Life Insurance Association of Malaysia vice president and AmMetLife Insurance Malaysia CEO Rangam Bir said the key word, both on the health and insurance side, is trust.

Mr Rangam Bir

"As long as we are not able to establish that confidence and trust, there will always be challenges in terms of how technology adoption is seen in healthcare and health insurance. The pandemic has served as a powerful catalyst, prompting us to reimagine how healthcare is delivered, accessed and protected," he said.

"Today, AI stands at the forefront, redefining not only how we diagnose and treat but also how we underwrite, price, cover and serve customers. We are at a pivotal point in the history of technological evolution, akin to the advent of telephones, computers, the internet and similar technologies that have transformed human society over decades," Mr Bir said.

Since late last year, significant social and political discussions around healthcare costs and inflation-driven premium increases have highlighted the urgent need for meaningful reform. Without this, the system will continue to face unsustainable pressures.

"Upholding ethics, data privacy and transparency is crucial in a domain as personal and vital as health and protection," Mr Bir said.

Building a more sustainable approach

IBNR Management Consulting managing director Rudolf Frei delved into the technical aspects and presented practical solutions for building a more sustainable approach to fraud management.
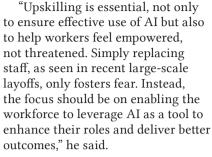

Mr Rudolf Frei

"Measuring the true extent of fraud is inherently difficult. We can only account for what we detect, which is a major challenge. Fraud presents several serious issues," Mr Frei said.

"First, it's not a victimless crime; there are often innocent people affected, including cases involving property damage or, in life and health insurance, even fatalities. Second, there is significant financial harm, with insurers bearing high investigation costs and resource burdens. Third, policyholders are impacted as fraud contributes to rising premiums year after year. And finally, fraud affects affordability, particularly in the health insurance space, making coverage less accessible to those who need it most," he said.

The beauty of the integration of AI in healthcare was further explained by Global HealthTech Intelligence founding member and chief research officer Dario Heymann.

Dr Dario Heymann

"Healthcare, like many other sectors, involves highly repetitive tasks- an area where AI excels. Whether it's writing reports or managing routine processes, AI can significantly improve efficiency. The key is to embrace the technology and explore how it can be effectively integrated into existing workflows, while being mindful of data privacy and information security," Dr Heymann said.

"AI's potential is particularly powerful in healthcare due to the rising burden of administrative costs. Data shows just how significant this burden is, especially as populations grow sicker and require more complex care. Much of the administrative work is repetitive and time-consuming, making it ideal for automation. However, successful implementation depends on workforce readiness.

"Upskilling is essential, not only to ensure effective use of AI but also to help workers feel empowered, not threatened. Simply replacing staff, as seen in recent large-scale layoffs, only fosters fear. Instead, the focus should be on enabling the workforce to leverage AI as a tool to enhance their roles and deliver better outcomes," he said.

AI's role in population health management

The global healthcare system is facing unprecedented pressures driven by ageing populations, rising chronic disease burdens and provider shortages.

In addition to the global challenges, Asia is facing significant healthcare disparities, with some of the best and the worst healthcare systems.

Ms Myra Yu

Teladoc Health managing director for Asia Myra Yu gave an insight about a platform called Teladoc which leverages over 2bn health and engagement data points.

"AI's impact is already evident: a 70% reduction in waiting times, 150% faster stroke diagnoses and significant weight loss outcomes through intelligent nudging. AI has become a great help assisting health professionals to work more efficiently, with better accuracy.

The platform's engagement engine further personalises care by segmenting customer bases and tailoring communication based on demographic and behavioural profiles. This approach supports a continuous, life-stage-based journey: from maternity and chronic care to ageing and end-of-life support," Ms Yu said.

Digital healthcare in the Philippines

Asian Capital Advisors managing director John Spence gave us an insight on how digitisation presents a big opportunity to improve healthcare outcomes in the Philippines.

Mr John Spence

"The first important issue is

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L-R: Ms Sejal Mistry, Dr Mayank Gurnani, Prof Maurice Tan, Ms Myra Yu and Mr Makoto Okubo

government investment in healthcare which has been addressed, which is a positive step. The next challenge is building a digital healthcare system to support universal health coverage by connecting doctors and patients electronically. Private enterprise is stepping in to help create this digital infrastructure," Mr Spence said.

"Of course, there are challenges, Wi-Fi access can be unreliable in some areas, and much of the population still relies heavily on Facebook for communication. In fact, the Philippines has one of the highest Facebook usage rates globally.

That said, there's strong potential to build a "care-tech" ecosystem: connecting clinics, labs, hospitals, pharmacies, HMOs (health maintenance organisations, which are like health insurance) and mobile apps. The goal is integration.

From an insurance perspective, the investment opportunity lies in the ability to upsell digital healthcare solutions to individuals currently covered by the national healthcare programme," he said.

AI is hype and hype follows money

Unpacking from a panel discussion on the key expectations from AI in healthcare and its outcomes, National University of Singapore Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine programme director Maurice Tan said there is a lot of hype around AI because hype follows money.

He said last year around $7.6bn went into AI-related startups and one in every four dollars invested in health tech is going into AI – so the excitement is driven by investment.

"But adoption is another matter. A Harvard Business Review report in February highlighted how people are using AI, and interestingly, therapy and counselling ranked highest.

In mental health and wellness, where there's a major shortage of psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists, AI is being used to help fill the gaps," Mr Tan said.

"The healthcare ecosystem in Singapore is very active, with strong government support and funding to drive AI adoption and develop new solutions; especially given the critical shortage of manpower in the sector," he also said.

The Agency for Science, Technology and Research venture creation and growth and innovation and enterprise deputy director Mayank Gurnani said, "Just before and during COVID, simply mentioning "AI" in your pitch deck could secure funding – money was being thrown at anything AI-related. But things have cooled down since. Now, investors and organisations are asking more critical questions: What data trained your AI? What's its performance? What are its limitations?"

"This is a typical tech adoption cycle. People get excited, early adopters jump in, often taking on the most cost and risk. But sectors like healthcare and finance, where insurance sits at the intersection, are naturally conservative. They watch, evaluate, and then move decisively when ready.

When the insurance industry starts embracing AI more fully, it will be deliberate and impactful. From a government perspective, AI is revolutionary, but success depends heavily on using the right data to develop it responsibly," Dr Gurnani said.

Further to that discussion, Nippon Life Insurance Company global business planning department and international affairs general manager Makoto Okubo said the business model has changed as we now focus on prevention and keeping customers

healthy and happy.

"Nippon Life owns a large hospital in Osaka and are collaborating with tech companies and research institutes to experiment with AI in healthcare. We're not just part of insurance innovation- we're also advancing medical innovation," he said.

"AI supports us in multiple ways. For sales, it helps our 55,000 tied agents by analysing decades of data to recommend the right people to visit and how to approach them. In claims handling, where expectations are high in Japan, AI helps identify potential claims even before customers file them," he added.

Smarter, more human-centric insurance ecosystem

Drawing the conference to a close, Mr Spence said, "The goal is to build a smarter, more human-centric insurance ecosystem."

"Our discussions emphasised collaboration, not to replace, but to enhance the human touch in care, product design and claims, while promoting healthier living through prevention. As one speaker noted, today's diseases could lead to tomorrow's solutions, but innovation must come with ethical responsibility, robust regulation and strong partnerships.

Ultimately, our shared goal is to improve wellbeing at every stage of life, from promoting good health to supporting palliative care. We hope this conference has sparked new ideas and strengthened collaboration between insurers and healthcare professionals," he said.

The 20th Asia Conference on Healthcare and Health Insurance, organised by *Asia Insurance Review* and sponsored by flip.health, AXA, IBNR and Teladoc HEALTH, ran from 19-20 May 2025 in Singapore.