

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence in Advancing Continuing Health Professions Development in Southeast Asia

Karunathilake, I. M., de Abrew, A.

Introduction

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is an essential component of lifelong learning for healthcare professionals, ensuring they develop update and refine their knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours across all relevant areas of practice. The growing healthcare demands in South-East Asia due to changing demographics and trends in communicable and non-communicable diseases has made it imperative for medical professionals to undergo continuous learning and development beyond their initial training..

The implementation of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the South-East Asia (SEA) region faces several challenges. Limited financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified trainers hinder effective CPD delivery. The region's diverse healthcare systems, along with regulatory and policy gaps, create inconsistencies in CPD implementation. Additionally, a lack of awareness among healthcare professionals and institutions reduces engagement and investment in CPD initiatives (Karunathilake *et al.*, 2024).

Artificial Intelligence driven solutions have the potential to address many challenges hindering the effective implementation of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the South-East Asia (SEA) Region.

AI in CPD: Transforming Medical Education

The role of AI role in CPD is not just about convenience; it has the potential to revolutionize healthcare education by offering customized learning experiences, providing predictive analytics on competency gaps, and supporting decision-making processes. In Southeast Asia, the rapid integration of AI into CPD is reshaping traditional learning paradigms. AI-powered CPD platforms offer adaptive learning, real-time assessments, and automation of administrative tasks, making education more efficient and personalized. AI-based CPD programs can significantly enhance professional competency, reduce knowledge gaps, and ensure that healthcare professionals maintain a high standard of care (Karunathilake *et al.*, 2022).

The application of AI in developing clinical expertise is a fast expanding area of research, along with AI in areas such as diagnostics and radiology. In these fields, AI technologies, together with big data and cloud computing, support physicians in clinical decision-making. Healthcare professionals must acquire proficiency in utilizing AI through professional training programs, self-directed learning, or online courses to enhance efficiency and accuracy in medical practice (Sun *et al.*, 2023).

At present, AI is being extensively integrated into medical education. For example, the IBM Watson system employs evidence-based learning models to assist medical students in making informed decisions regarding various oncology treatments. Similarly, the Virtual Patient Learning System (VPLS) simulates real

Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Corresponding author: Prof. I . M. Karunathilake
Email: indika@medarc.cmb.ac.lk



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patient scenarios, allowing students to independently determine appropriate examination steps and clinical decisions, thereby enhancing their clinical reasoning and judgment skills (Lee *et al.*, 2021). AI chatbots, such as those used in Babylon and Ada, assist patients in symptom identification and recommending appropriate actions in community and primary care settings. When integrated with wearable devices like smartwatches, these chatbots provide valuable insights to patients and caregivers, promoting better health behaviors, sleep, and overall well-being (Bajwa *et al.*, 2021).

Several studies emphasize the role of AI in ambient and intelligent healthcare. Technologies such as Emerald, a wireless sensor platform developed by MIT researchers, enable remote monitoring of sleep, breathing, and behavior. Similarly, Google Nest utilizes motion and sound sensors to track sleep patterns, including disturbances (Muio, 2021). Recent research also explores the use of smart speakers for contactless heart rhythm monitoring (Wang *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, AI-driven ambient clinical intelligence, leveraging natural language processing (NLP), can automate administrative tasks like electronic health record documentation, optimizing clinical workflows and allowing clinicians to dedicate more time to patient care.

Challenges of AI Integration in CPD

Despite its advantages, AI implementation in CPD faces several challenges. These challenges encompass, but are not limited to, issues related to data quality and accessibility, technical infrastructure, organizational capacity, and adherence to ethical and responsible practices, along with considerations of safety and regulatory compliance (Bajwa *et al.*, 2021).

Future Directions

To maximize the benefits of AI in CPD, the following strategies should be implemented:

1. **Investment in AI Infrastructure:** Governments and institutions must enhance digital infrastructure to ensure equitable access to AI-powered CPD tools.
2. **Regulatory Frameworks:** Development of ethical and legal guidelines for AI use in medical education is crucial. Governments must work closely with professional bodies to create standardized AI governance policies.
3. **Faculty Training Programs:** Equipping educators with AI literacy will enhance the effectiveness of AI-driven CPD initiatives.
4. **Public-Private Collaborations:** Partnerships between governments, tech companies, and medical institutions can accelerate AI-driven CPD development and ensure widespread accessibility.
5. **Localized AI Solutions:** AI models should be trained on region-specific medical cases to ensure relevance to Southeast Asian healthcare challenges.

Conclusion

The integration of AI into Continuing Professional Development holds significant potential to enhance healthcare education and professional competency in the SEA region. By offering personalized learning experiences, real-time assessments, and automation of administrative tasks, AI-driven CPD can address existing challenges such as resource limitations, infrastructure gaps, and inconsistencies in implementation. However, successful AI adoption requires investment in digital infrastructure, the establishment of regulatory frameworks, faculty training, and collaborative efforts between public and private sectors. Furthermore, the development of localized AI solutions tailored to regional healthcare needs is essential. Moving forward, a strategic and well-regulated approach to AI integration in CPD will be critical to ensuring high-quality, equitable,

and sustainable professional development for healthcare practitioners in the region.

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