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# Health IT solutions pave the way for “smarter” care

Singapore’s healthcare providers are investing more into health IT solutions to improve their systems and encourage doctors to care for patients in a “smarter” way

**S**ingapore wants to be a “smart” nation – especially when it comes to its healthcare. By anticipating the challenges of the future, such as an ageing population and high urban density, the government plans to implement big data and analytics technologies and sensor networks nation-wide, according to the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA).

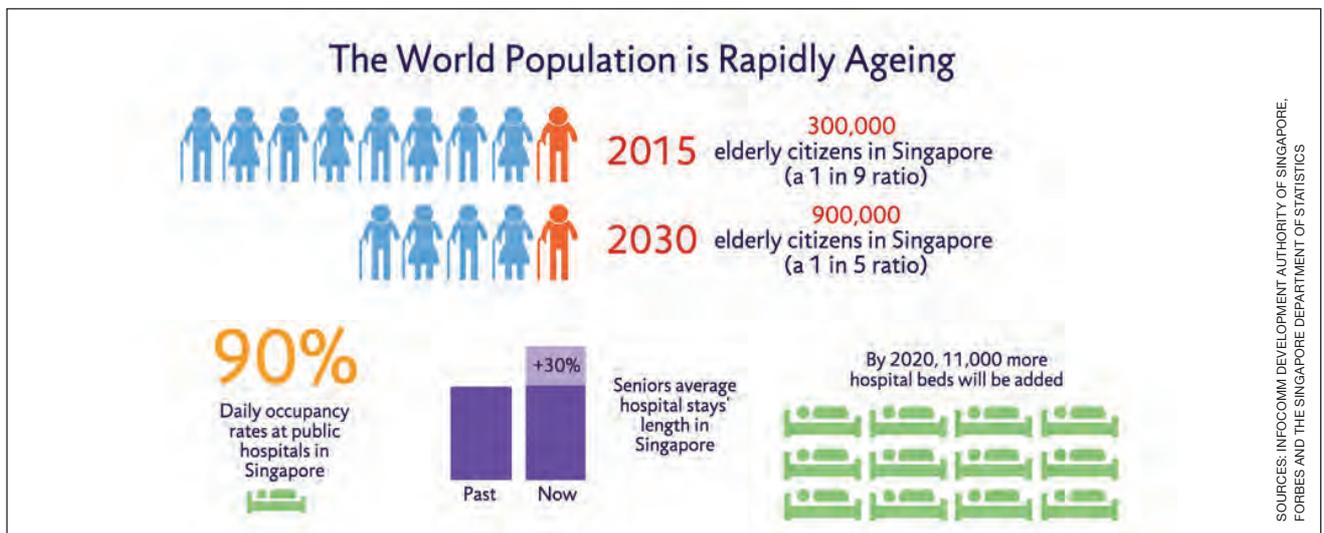
Such initiatives are coming at a crucial time. Singaporeans are living longer. According to the IDA, there will be an estimated 900,000 elderly citizens in Singapore by 2030 – that is, one in five Singaporeans. This is a threefold increase from 300,000 elderly citizens in 2015.

Therefore, smart health holds great potential for public health and health systems, and could possibly transform the doctor-patient relationship.

myHealth Sentinel, a home-grown healthcare tech firm, is currently partnering with the National University Health System (NUHS), a public health agency, to deliver telehealth services, and is in talks with several nursing homes to provide such services, reported the Straits Times in October.

With their platform, elderly patients are able to send data of blood pressure and other metrics to their nurses using sensor cuffs from the comfort of their own homes – sparing them a trip to the hospital.

Public-private partnerships like this demonstrate growth in the health tech industry, said William Chew, managing director





more accurate decision at every point of care. Doctors may also clarify drug information or a particular question quickly.

“Why do doctors feel the need to do [online] searches? Because medicine is a vast and huge subject, and it keeps changing ... there are new findings, there are new drugs that are being developed on a daily basis,” she says. Teaching universities in Singapore are using ClinicalKey for medical education purposes as well, she adds.

**Patterns in healthcare data can improve care for patients**

Patients stand to benefit the most from smart health. Data discovery, or uncovering the hidden patterns and trends in healthcare data, allows clinicians to make smarter choices that lead to them being able to treat more patients, says Charlie Farah, Qlik’s director of market development for the healthcare and public sector.

Through data discovery, healthcare professionals are given greater insight into improving their practices so they can be considerate in their clinical decisions. For example, junior clinicians may order a suite of pathology tests even though the patient might only need half of these tests because that’s how they were trained, says Farah.

Through a trial of a data visualisation tool at a hospital at New South Wales in Australia, junior doctors were able to have a greater appreciation for what it cost the system to run tests that were not relevant to a patient’s treatment. Not only does it reduce patient discomfort by requiring less blood drawn, it also cuts costs.

“Patients aren’t getting pricked and put in uncomfortable situations ... From a system perspective, you just get smarter. It’s not like the data was never available, the data’s always been available – it’s just never been used in a meaningful way,” says Farah. Over a brief six-month period, the hospital ended up saving over US\$180,000 in just four wards.

“It’s not like the data was never available, the data’s always been available – it’s just never been used in a meaningful way. There’s going to be significant benefit, not only from a financial perspective, but also from a resource perspective because people can use their time more efficiently”

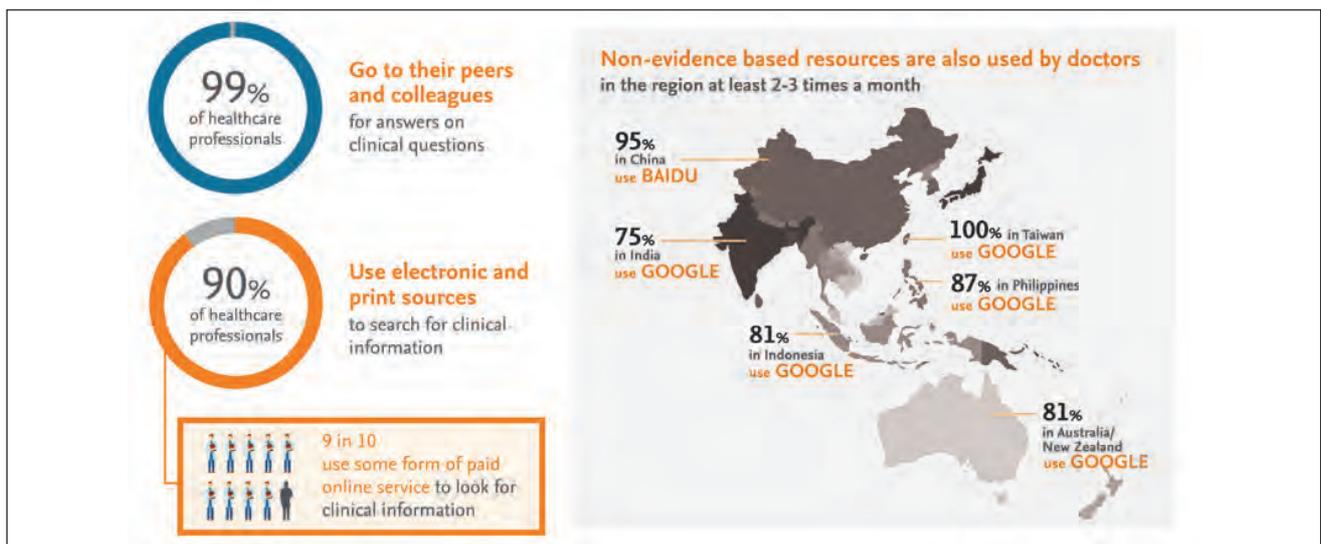


— Charlie Farah  
Director of market development for the healthcare and public sector, Qlik

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In an email statement provided to *Global Health and Travel*, Terry Smagh, managing director and vice president for Qlik Asia, said that Qlik’s visual analytics platform has been helping a leading medical group in Singapore to facilitate easier and faster collaboration between departments, reducing the time needed for internal processes. “The increased speed of business also benefits patients. They get their medical reports sooner,” he said. **GHT**

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