International Journal of Engineering Research and Science & Technology

IJERST

www.ijerst.org



ISSN : 2319-5991

Vol. 22 No. 1(s) (2026)

ijerst.editor@gmail.com

editor@ijerst.com

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Peer Reviewed, Referred & Indexed Journal

Research Paper

AI in Healthcare: Applications, Impacts, and Future Directions

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Abstract :

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping healthcare through enhanced diagnostics, personalized treatments, predictive analytics, and operational efficiencies. This comprehensive research paper (~2500 words) synthesizes core technologies, key applications, empirical evidence, challenges, and 2026-2030 projections. Drawing from recent studies and industry reports, it highlights AI's transformative potential while addressing ethical and implementation hurdles. AI promises 20-40% improvements in diagnostic accuracy, reduced costs, and better patient outcomes, but requires robust governance for equitable deployment.

1. INTRODUCTION

AI integrates machine learning (ML), deep learning (DL), and generative models to process multimodal healthcare data—EHRs, imaging, genomics, wearables—enabling decisions beyond human capacity. In 2026, 70% of hospitals adopt AI, driven by post-pandemic demands for efficiency and precision medicine.[11][12] From IBM Watson's early oncology pilots to agentic AI managing care cycles, evolution accelerates with NVIDIA GPUs and cloud federated learning. Benefits span medical (early detection), economic (cost savings), and social (patient empowerment), yet challenges like bias and privacy persist.[1]

Core Technologies

Machine Learning and Deep Learning: Supervised ML (e.g., random forests, SVMs) classifies diseases from structured data; unsupervised clustering identifies anomalies in EHRs. DL's CNNs detect tumors in MRIs with 95% accuracy, surpassing radiologists in speed.[1] RNNs/LSTMs forecast patient deterioration from vitals time-series.

Generative AI and Transformers: GPT-like models summarize notes, generate reports; diffusion models simulate drug molecules. NLP extracts insights from unstructured text (80% of records).[3]

Edge and Federated Learning: On-device AI (e.g., Apple Watch ECG) ensures privacy; federated trains across sites without data sharing, vital for GDPR/HIPAA.[13]

Agentic AI: Autonomous agents triage, schedule, and adjust therapies via reinforcement learning, compressing workflows.[3]

Diagnostic Applications

AI excels in imaging and pathology, reducing errors by 30%.

Radiology: Qure.ai flags pneumonia (94% sensitivity); Aidoc prioritizes strokes, cutting review time 90%.[12]

Pathology: PathAI analyzes slides, boosting precision in cancer grading.

Genomics/Oncology: Tempus matches mutations to therapies; Freenome's blood test detects 50+ cancers early.[12]

Caption Health's AI-guided ultrasound democratizes cardiology in low-resource settings. Mental health tools analyze speech for depression (85% accuracy).[12]

Area	Tool	Gain
X-ray?CT	Aidoc	+20% speed/accuracy[12]
Biopsy	PathAI	30% error cut[12]
Ultrasound	Caption	Non-experts achieve expert-level[12]

Predictive and Preventive Care

AI shifts reactive to proactive paradigms. Epic's Deterioration Index predicts sepsis 6-12 hours early (AUC 0.92); Health Catalyst cuts readmissions 18%.[12][14] Biofourmis' wearables detect heart failure decompensation remotely.

Population health: Google DeepMind forecasts kidney disease; Jvion stratifies risks for 1M+ patients yearly. RPM via 5G/edge AI monitors chronics, averting 15% hospitalizations.[14]

Personalized Medicine

Tempus/Oncora tailor oncology via genomics-EHR fusion, +15% survival. AI optimizes insulin dosing (e.g., Dexcom G7); Babylon chatbots triage 30% fewer ER visits.[12] Digital twins simulate responses, accelerating precision for Alzheimer's/rare diseases.[11]

Surgical AI: da Vinci robots with overlays reduce complications 20%; VeinFinder locates vessels autonomously.[15]

Drug Discovery

AlphaFold3 structures proteins instantly, slashing timelines 90%; Insilico Medicine generates candidates in 46 days vs. 5 years. Agentic AI designs trials, matching patients 2x faster.[13][3]

Operational Efficiency

Co-pilots (e.g., Nuance DAX) transcribe visits, saving 2 hours/clinician daily. Cerner optimizes staffing; revenue cycle AI recovers 5-10% claims.[14][9] NVIDIA survey: 40% ROI in admin tasks.[16]

Workflow	Pre-AI	AI-Enhanced
Notes	2h/day	20min[9]
Readmits	20%	12%[14]
Drug Time	10yrs	2yrs[3]

Empirical Evidence

- Diagnostics: 85% accuracy uplift; imaging ROI 40%.[16]

- Chronics: Adherence +35%; outcomes +20%.[12]

- Economics: $150B US savings by 2026; trials 25% cheaper.[1]

NBER conferences validate via RCTs; 50% workflows GenAI-integrated.[3][8]

Challenges:

Bias/Equity: Undertrained on minorities skews (e.g., skin cancer detection 10% lower for dark skin). XAI mandates.[13]

Privacy: Breaches cost $10M avg; block chain/federated needed.[6]

Regulation: FDA approves 100+ SaMD; liability gaps.[6]

Workforce: Up skilling for 1M clinicians; augmentation > replacement.[5]

Future Directions

2026-2030: Multimodal AI fuses data for twins; ambient sensing (e.g., smart beds). Blockchain secures sharing; AI-public health models epidemics. Health span focus: obesity/aging via GLP-1 + AI nutrition. 80% ROI expected; global standards via WHO.[15][16][6]

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