

Where tech will take healthcare

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

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The outdated lone-doctor model where illnesses are treated in siloes has to change. Care has to be outcomes based, it has to be measurable and it has to be tech enabled.

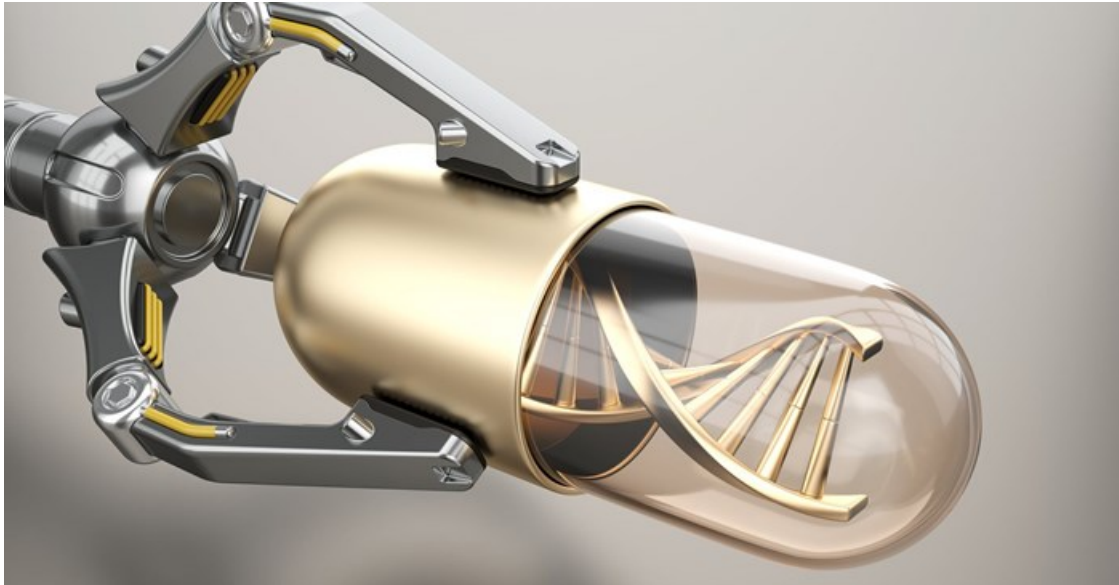


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The fourth industrial revolution is not way off on the horizon anymore, it already exists. “Technology is moving at such a phenomenal pace that it’s hard to keep up,” says Dr Riaz Montara, cardiologist and medical entrepreneur. His company, BrandMed, focuses on connected healthcare solutions.

“Drugs alone are not enough to manage disease and the disease burden will become unmanageable unless innovative solutions are implemented.”

Home monitoring

When it comes to dealing with non-communicable diseases (NCDs), the concept of one-size-fits-all solutions no longer apply,” he says.

Patients often aren’t empowered to know what to do with information on their state of health. “In a study comprising 900

patients, 90% of the patients weren't told their risk factor by doctors," he says.

The growing market of home monitoring apps that measure health risk factors such as blood pressure and glucose levels taps into the concept of putting patients in control of their health by providing them a built-in risk analysis. "Technology is empowering patients in knowing what's wrong with them and gives doctors the opportunity to interact with patients," he says.

Pharmacogenomics

Research now shows that genomics are playing an increasingly important role in how individuals react to treatment regimens. "You can do a test that measures your response to drugs, and you can keep a diary on your phone," Montara says.

By collecting this data, we are creating a biobank of DNA. Our genes are critically important to treatment outcomes," he says.

Adherence

Technology empowers patients in knowing what's wrong with them, and allows doctors to communicate directly with them through the camera in their phones. Armed with more knowledge, patients are more likely to adhere to monitoring their condition and taking their medication.

Artificial intelligence

Montara predicts that artificial intelligence (AI) will have a significant impact on the doctor/patient relationship. "In the next five to 10 years, things are going to change profoundly."

Sensors will more accurately diagnose disease and doctors will end up as more as psychologists. "We will still need the human relationship, and doctors will still be needed in acute care."

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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