

# Job automation



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Automation in Healthcare Automation in Healthcare The Healthcare field is notorious for its slow and late adoption of potentially labor-saving and cost-saving technology. However, one cannot deny the fact that the healthcare field too is changing considerably as a result of technology. According to the HealthLeaders Media Industry Survey 2012, labor costs are one of the most important cost drivers in the industry. The stunning revelation is that nearly 50-60% of the total expenses are incurred in the form of salaries and benefits. The benefits of automation are rather obvious from the figures. Betbeze, in an article named Automation and the healthcare cost curve dated April 2012 reports how the Dallas-based Parkland Health & Hospital System adopted automation in the pharmacy. The hospital has a robotic pick-and-pull system which can locate, prepare, and package pharmaceuticals for each patient. This helps the hospital reduce the number of staff required to furnish the orders.

Another important area is the evidence-based care where automation is visible. An example is the Atrius Health which has nearly 1000 physicians employed at nearly 30 locations. The group was finding it difficult to keep its all physicians well-informed of the new developments in evidence-based medicine treatment protocols. For that purpose, the physicians had to rely on an online service from a clinical decision-support system named UpToDate. However, as it required the use of web browsers, the physicians had to leave the electronic medical record to conduct any search. However, presently, this service is installed as an additional button with the Epic EMR system. That means it is easier and more convenient for the physicians, thus saving a lot of time.

At this juncture, it becomes necessary to go back to Parkland Hospital to see

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how it reduced its financial counselors by 35% through the adoption of automated eligibility rechecks. Earlier, people used to come back again to see a counselor to requalify to receive public assistance for medical care. However, presently, the system has introduced automation in this area, which allows 100% automation in eligibility rechecking.

Another area is the labs of hospitals. Admittedly, present day labs are capable of receiving specimens, and centrifuging and loading the specimens onto an analyzer. The automation continues till the result is released. It is accepted by most healthcare experts that such labs are free from issues associated with human errors like mixing up specimens, interchanging results, and misplacing specimens. One cannot ignore the surgical area here. There are various hospitals using the da Vinci surgical system. This system is successfully used for various urologic, gynecologic, cardiothoracic, and other general surgery procedures (da Vinci Surgery).

Admittedly, hospitals are increasingly looking for automation because of the benefits in terms of efficiency, cost, and capacity. As already seen, there is a decrease in the number of young people adopting certain medical professions. Moreover, the profit margins are thinning due to the escalating running expenditures. As the examples prove, automation is the best way to cut running costs. Moreover, automation makes works easier and more accurate, and saves the staff from monotonous tasks.

However, one cannot ignore the fact that if the trend continuous, within a decade, the number of people required in the medical profession will go down considerably. Most of the processes in pharmacies, labs and surgeries will be done by machines.

## References

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