



Evolution of Healthcare Sharing and Caring

Introduction

Arab Health, the leading healthcare business platform in the Middle East, organised by Informa Markets, returned to its traditional winter timing in January 2022, drawing 400 speakers and more than 80,000 professional visits under the theme “United by Business, Forging Ahead”.

During the week, the disciplines focused on radiology, orthopaedics, obs & gyn and surgery, while ‘Healthcare Transformation Talks’ proved a popular new addition to the Transformation Zone. Disruptors, world-renowned experts, innovators and industry leaders provided the latest insights, discoveries and predictions on the future of healthcare with key highlights that included AI, digital health and VR.

In this report we reveal healthcare leaders, including Reenita Das, Prof Dr. Giles W. L. Boland and Dr. Alaa Murabit into the latest challenges and opportunities faced by the industry. This comes at a time when the world continues to grapple with a new COVID-19 variant while embracing the future.

A prevalent talking point was unity and inclusivity across silos, whether through the sharing of data, empathising with patients, advocating women in leadership roles, or aligning employees under transformational leadership. Amidst pressing challenges and change, it suggests a need to forge a path together collectively.

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Arab Health
By Informa Markets

Welcome to
Arab Health



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Empathetic healthcare

Speakers emphasised the human touch that is understanding the patient's needs, while also welcoming the utilisation of technology.

Amina Mahmood Ahmed, Radiology Manager, Fujairah Hospital, Emirates Health Services, Fujairah, UAE, revealed that “Up to 15 per cent of MRI patients terminate their examination due to anxiety.” She noted that this figure could be reduced by 5 per cent simply by implementing a cognitive approach during patient interaction.

In practice this begins from the moment the patient arrives for their appointment. The MRI radiographer can communicate with the patient so that they become more familiar with the environment and process. Patients are also advised to bring family support, a friend if necessary, or a personal choice of music that they may listen to during the exam.

“If the patient is prepared, with a full explanation, I think they will have a more peaceful experience as they are scanned, instead of going through the stresses and the doubts and questions in their mind. Communication and gaining the patient's trust is very important,” Ahmed explained.

Charlotte Graungaard Falkvard, President Elect, European Federation of Radiographer Societies, Copenhagen, Denmark, expressed similar views, advocating a humanistic approach in radiology that involves treating the patient with maximum care and attention.

“There is a tendency in radiographers thinking that women coming in to have their breasts examined must be afraid of cancer. And maybe 90 per cent are. But not the remaining 10 per cent. They consider a different thought – that they are not ill, and can continue to be well,” she explained. “Yet this is at odds with what radiographers believe and how they behave towards the patient.”

In Denmark, she continued, radiographers are authorised to treat the patient with maximum care and attention. While there may be two or three patients waiting for their screen time, the patient currently undergoing treatment cannot be ‘jumped’ over. “You have a duty. We have to put the patient first, at the heart of our interest – and only then will we succeed.”

While technology, and AI in particular, is expected to play a bigger role in radiology, Falkvard sees humanism growing in importance, rather than retreating. “Demand for abilities in this area will grow. Technology provides the foundation for us: humanism doesn't mean anything if we don't have the technology. They complement each other.”





Caring for caregivers

While speakers urged the need for patient empathy, they also stressed the importance of looking after the caregivers themselves.

Prof Dr. Michael Fuchsjäger, Chairman of the Board of the European Society of Radiology, and Professor of Radiology and Chairman of the Department of Radiology, Medical University Graz in Austria, described the current situation facing radiology professionals as “overwhelming”.

Doctors, nurses, radiographers and other medical staff are having to confront a rising workload, fears and uncertainties over possible COVID-19 infections and lockdowns, especially as new coronavirus variants continue to emerge.

“We don’t know what Omicron will mean,” he offered as an example. “The first studies say that symptoms will be less severe, but with three times the number of infections we have to be prepared for whatever that means in our profession.”

There is a need for resilience, he continued, and leaders in large departments must be aware of this need, “making sure that people don’t burn out.”

People need to take breaks rather than overwork themselves, Prof Fuchsjäger underlined, revealing that even healthcare leaders burn out or have borderline symptoms that takes a high level of self-observation to realise or prevent. The occurrence is quite common, as professionals prioritise taking care of others before looking after themselves.

Prof Dr. Giles W. L. Boland, President, Brigham and Women’s Physician Organizations and a Philip H. Cook Professor of Radiology, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, also saw burnout as an issue in the radiology profession.

“Doctors are worn out,” he said. “A lot of it is around autonomy that has been taken away. Their work is now being managed by what they see as bureaucrats and/or governments. How do we address this so that radiologists believe that this is all the right thing for patients?”

Inclusivity in healthcare

Healthcare speakers during the week highlighted challenges and opportunities in the area of diversity and inclusion.

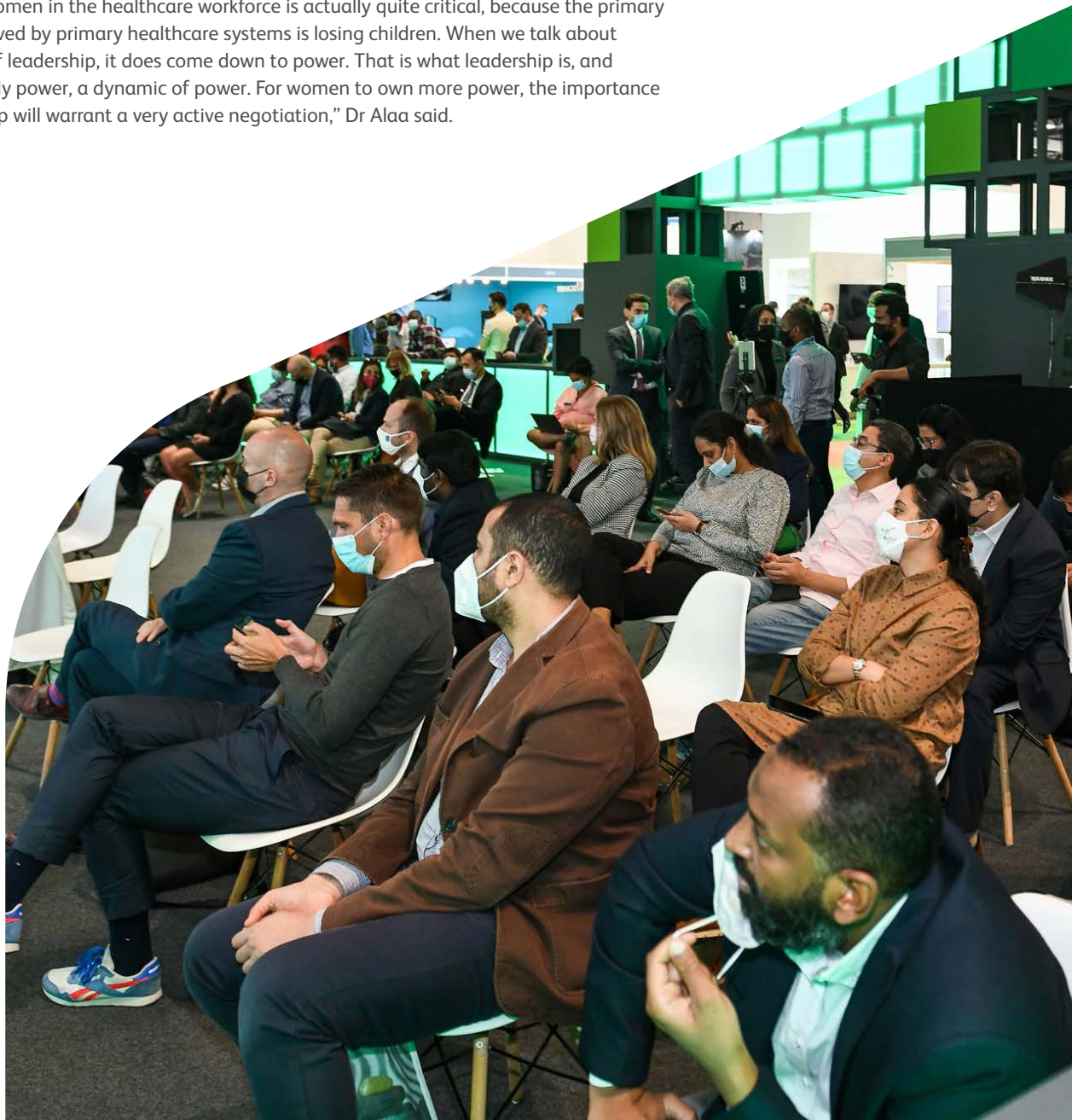
Speaking on “Femtech 2030 - Growth Opportunities in Women’s Health”, **Reenita Das**, Senior Vice-President and Partner, Frost & Sullivan, explained how there remains a shortage of investment in Femtech worldwide, despite the female population worldwide expected to reach 4.2 billion in 2030. This included a lack of women as VCs and accelerators, and Femtech apps created by men.

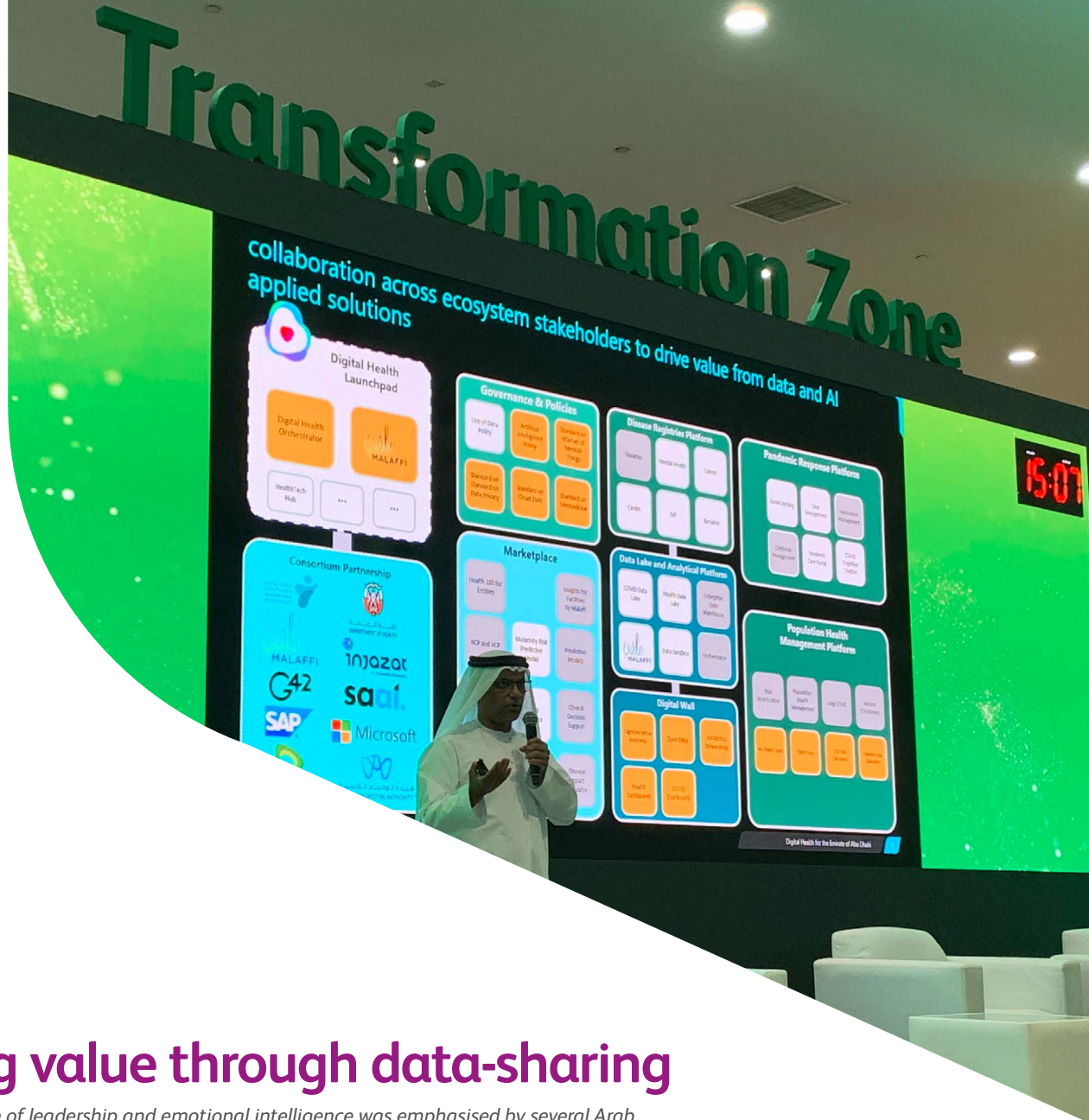
“The future is in gender-specific health and wellness, for both women and men.” We need to stop looking at healthcare as a product, and our definition of healthcare needs to change. Health is more than an absence of disease, it is about building the prevention and prediction part of the system, which will be integral to the long-term success of our communities, and enlisting businesses, medical providers, governments and non-profits to work together,” Das said.

Women in healthcare was a topic of discussion at the Future Health Summit, a new addition to the week held on 25 January 2022. The evening was attended by more than 150 senior government healthcare officials, CEOs and visionaries from across the globe who are building a future-proof healthcare strategy.

A panel that included **Dr Alaa Murabit**, Medical Doctor, Global Security Strategist, Women’s Rights Advocate and United Nations High-Level Commissioner on Health, Employment & Economic Growth looked at the importance of creating roles and opportunities for female leaders.

“The population of women in the healthcare workforce is actually quite critical, because the primary population that is served by primary healthcare systems is losing children. When we talk about women in positions of leadership, it does come down to power. That is what leadership is, and leadership is inherently power, a dynamic of power. For women to own more power, the importance of women’s leadership will warrant a very active negotiation,” Dr Alaa said.





Creating value through data-sharing

While the importance of leadership and emotional intelligence was emphasised by several Arab Health speakers, others pointed to more innovative solutions as a form of improving patient engagement.

Erik Van Hoeymissen, Global Business Development Director Clinician Solutions, 3M, Dubai, highlighted the role of technology in enabling patient empathy.

He explained during his talk “Creating Time to Care: Closing the Loop on Clinical Documentation Using Artificial Intelligence” how a virtual assistant solution is enabling more efficient workflows for physicians through speech recognition and natural language processing.

“We significantly remove the administration work from the doctor and create time to care,” he told the audience. “AI is all about bringing empathy between doctors and patients. If we can only add a few minutes to bring that to the consultation, the outcome would be great.”

Similarly, physicians are burning out due to documentation and instead turning to digital technologies to connect with their patients, according to **Brad Kellogg**, Director Consulting Services at Houston Methodist Global HealthCare.

He gave the example of a virtual ICU, through which patients are monitored via a camera and assisted by audio. The data given through this ICU is transmitted in real-time to physicians who are then enabled to treat patients efficiently.

Kellogg, who was presenting during the Healthcare Transformation Talks on “Leading medicine through digital health”, questioned whether hospitals had the right team or even the right culture that allowed innovation to flourish. “Have you adapted your processes, or streamlined them, or upskilled your staff?”

Similarly, **Massimo Cannizzo**, CEO and Co-Founder, Gellify, Dubai, pointed to a shortage of skilled professionals, as well as low awareness and trust, as factors behind the low adoption of blockchain technology in his talk “How AI data science will increase longevity”. He elaborated on blockchain’s potential in revolutionising healthcare through securing patient’s data in a single location that is both accessible and safe.

One approach to facilitating innovation is through sharing information, as described by **Dr Hamed Al Hashemi**, Executive Director Strategic Affairs, Department of Health Abu Dhabi. Presenting during the Healthcare Transformation Talks on various projects encompassing digital platforms, Dr Al Hashemi introduced to his audience a sandbox deployed in Abu Dhabi that allowed different healthcare stakeholders access to health data.

“We sit on massive amounts of data, yet we are not using it in a way that generates benefits to patients or providers, or even to enable healthcare to become an engine for economic growth,” he cautioned during his talk “Saving lives with data”.

One example of information sharing was offered by **Dr Atif Al Braiki**, CEO, Abu Dhabi Health Data Services in Abu Dhabi, who described in his talk “Health Information Exchanges – Providing value to the entire healthcare system” how aggregating data through a “Health Information Exchange” was key to increasing the quality of care. Its platform Malaffi is positioned to benefit multiple stakeholders: hospitals, patients, insurers, government, pharmacies and clinics.

In his talk “Digital health just skipped a decade...What’s next?” during the Healthcare Transformation Talks, **Brandon Rowberry**, CEO – Digital Health, Aster DM Healthcare, Dubai, UAE, cautioned that data was still in its infancy and that it may take a long time before it was possible to create new value using a “massive amount of data”. He added that resulting digital solutions must also be simple and intuitive to be adopted, appealing to older generations as well as young.





Speaking separately on “Making Sense of Health Data”, **Jamie Ireland**, UAE Healthcare Lead, Amazon, Dubai also questioned whether health organisations were ready to create value. “There is a huge amount of talk moving from volume to value - but are healthcare systems ready to make that move?” he asked. He described how “By 2025 there will be an estimated 163 zettabytes of data, with 30 per cent of this in healthcare”, offering a powerful opportunity for organisations to make data-driven decisions.

Prof. Dr Giles W.L. Boland, President, Brigham and Women’s Physician Organizations and a Philip H. Cook Professor of Radiology, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, who spoke at the Radiology conference, highlighted the opportunity to build patient data sets with input and expertise from radiology professionals for the purpose of creating AI algorithms.

Prof Dr Boland however cautioned that sharing data sets with external parties posed challenges relating to confidentiality and patient information. “How do you protect patients, so that if you’re going to collaborate with a third-party company their data is secure?”

Conclusion

To conclude, the following were highlighted as key opportunities by the speakers named in this report:

- There remains a shortage of investment in Femtech worldwide. The future is gender-specific health and wellness.
- While empathetic and humanistic care towards patients is encouraged, there is also an urgent need to address healthcare professionals’ wellbeing (which in turn will benefit patients). Technology such as AI also has a role to play in removing burdens faced by health practitioners.
- Data offers enormous healthcare opportunities, yet while growing in volume remains in its infancy. Speakers highlighted the importance of sharing health data with and involving stakeholders, while also emphasising the need to protect this data.



About the report

The Evolution of Healthcare: Sharing and Caring is the latest report in a series that looks at the latest trends and issues shaping healthcare, based on opinions voiced by healthcare leaders at Informa Markets' Healthcare events.

Prevalent insights were derived by an expert from the Informa Markets team and features commentary during Arab Health 2022, an event hosted by the organisers of Medlab, Africa Health and FIME, from 24-27 January 2022.

Over four days, experts from across the globe convened in Dubai to discuss key topics relating to radiology, orthopaedics, obs & gyn and surgery, as well as AI, big data, VR, digital health and other technological advancements.

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