The Future of Healthcare Delivery

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The advancement of modern technology is a perpetual cycle that enhances the current ways in which we live and our quality of life, while also improving upon older technological conceptions. Just recently, virtual reality (VR), has risen to the top as a result of the media’s fascination with the profound level of sophistication with which the product operates. The first concept of virtual reality was developed in 1968 by Ivan Sutherland. Since then, Sutherland’s rudimentary invention has blossomed, as have its potential applications in life irrespective of the entertainment industry with which it is most commonly associated. Specifically, virtual reality’s applications in the healthcare industry are unprecedented and endless. As a matter of fact, the virtual reality market in medicine is “projected to grow to $3.8 billion by 2020, according to a report by Global Industry Analysts,” and “Grand View Research predicts this market to grow to a whopping $5.1 billion by 2025.” These projections make it apparent that in just a few years, significant and valuable progress will be made in medical VR technology.

In his article “Virtual Reality Breakthroughs in Medicine,” Jack Carfagno covers areas where the VR technology is currently making an impact on the healthcare industry. He states that the technology is being used to create virtual models of a patient’s anatomy and explains that, “360 degree-models are generated using CT and MRI images.” The ability to create such models has not only allowed surgeons to better understand a patient’s condition and identify a treatment, but to also plan how to most efficiently operate in the OR. Moreover, Carfagno argues that, VR has the potential to detect early Alzheimer’s disease as “mental satnav that aids in navigation.” This can facilitate in the identification of signs or Alzheimer’s disease as “mental satnav that aids in navigating,” and provides evidence of the program’s effectiveness stating “[o]ne 2010 study with 20 patients found that 16 no longer met the criteria for PTSD after VR treatment” (Wallis). Wallis states that “[t]herapists can even customize scenes in the program to match a patient’s experience. A keystroke can change the weather, add the sound of gunfire or the call to prayers. To think that the program can be customized to such a great extent is incredible.

As you can see, the applications of virtual reality in medicine are countless and even more so with respect to the patient. Often times, people jump to the conclusion that the doctor is the one benefiting from the inclusion of groundbreaking technologies in medicine, but virtual reality is an exception that manages to benefit everyone.

References

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