

Spok on mHealth



John Jordan is Spok's Regional Vice President of Sales for APAC. John thoroughly enjoys working with customers to improve clinical communications and patient care through technology.

HIMSS Asia Pacific spoke with our **Gold Corporate Member Spok** about all things mHealth, from the evolution of technology to drivers in the mHealth market, how mHealth is improving healthcare outcomes and what the future holds for this space. **John Jordan, Spok's Regional Vice President of Sales for Asia Pacific** tells us what's ahead of the curve.

How has healthcare technology evolved in the past 10 years? What are the biggest inertias with regards to the use of technology?

Over the past ten years one of the biggest contributing factors to healthcare technology evolution is the introduction of electronic health records (EHR). As a centralised location for patient information, technology solutions have and will continue to be developed to send information to and from EHR systems.

Additionally, the growth of mobile device use both personally and professionally has made a big impact on how healthcare is provided today. Doctors and nurses are able to coordinate care more efficiently with tools such as secure messaging on smartphones that links to the hospital's online directory and on-call roster. In addition, patients' lab and radiology results can also be sent directly to the ordering doctor's smartphone and flagged in the patient's electronic record for faster response and treatment (or release).

Along with technology, comes a large amount of data and key metrics. This has led to a more data-driven approach and will continue to broaden in the future. This includes tracking and measuring patient outcomes, test results, staff response times, etc., which helps hospitals identify areas for improvement and ultimately provide better patient care.

How do mHealth technologies improve healthcare outcomes? Specifically from the perspectives of:

Healthcare Providers

Good patient care depends on doctors' ability to collaborate with nurses and other doctors. This includes communication about consult requests, critical test results, patient updates, code calls, medication inquiries, and more. With doctors and nurses carrying mobile devices, technology can help ensure these communications are routed to the right people on their preferred device.

For example, when there is a change in patient status, or a patient pushes the nurse call button, a beep in the room or at a main nurse's station indicates the need for follow-up. Then the appropriate nurse is tracked down so she or he can walk to the patient's room and assess or assist. mHealth technologies can help route alarms and alerts associated with each patient directly to a nurse's mobile device. This allows nurses to "talk then walk," meaning they can talk with a patient using that device (perhaps a smartphone or Wi-Fi phone) and the patient's pillow speaker. Communicating this way before going to the room can cut down on distances walked and save time.

Patients

Patients receive better care and outcomes if their doctors and nurses are able to communicate more efficiently and effectively. With mHealth technologies such as automated clinical alerting and secure smartphone messaging, hospital staff can rapidly receive critical patient information on their mobile devices and take action.

Hospital's Bottom Line

Hospitals exist to improve the lives of their patients through the care they deliver. But they are also tasked with providing their services in the most efficient and effective ways possible. This means evaluating all of the possible ways to control and reduce costs using the latest technologies and workflow processes.

There are significant efficiencies and cost savings to be had through intuitive communications technologies that reduce length of stay and improve the handoff of patient information as shifts, staff, and events change.

What are some of the key drivers in the mHealth market?

Smartphones and tablets are some of the biggest drivers of mHealth. Inside the hospital, they allow doctors and nurses to easily access staff and patient information securely, in addition to sending and receiving communications on-the-go.

Patients are also taking a more proactive and connected approach to their health. This is evident in wearable technology and health tracker adoption rates over the past few years. Many are using this information in conversations with their healthcare providers to provide a clearer picture of their overall health.



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In Spok's whitepaper, information security is a key concern in a BYOD landscape. How can healthcare technology leaders address mobile security and the risk of cyberattacks?

Hospitals should have a comprehensive secure communications plan in place to protect patient data while still supporting efficient workflows and timely care coordination.

A large number of Spok customers use a 'bring your own device' (BYOD) approach when it comes to using smartphones throughout the hospital. Encryption is the easiest way to safeguard electronic protected health information (ePHI) from the wrong eyes and security breaches, but first you must understand where sensitive patient data is stored in your organisation and how it's transmitted. The IT department should be aware of many of the puzzle pieces, such as mobile devices that can be lost or stolen, and overall network security.

Many organisations rely on mobile device management (MDM) solutions to safeguard the unauthorised transmission of ePHI while supporting the desire of workers to use the mobile devices they are comfortable with and prefer.



Secure smartphone messaging applications such as Spok Mobile® often include security features such as encryption, application lock, automated message removal, password-protected inbox, and remote device wipe to keep messages secure in case the device is ever lost or stolen.

View Spok's whitepaper on BYOD Trends in Healthcare: An Industry Snapshot [here](#).



What do you foresee in the mHealth industry in the next 5 years?

We foresee a growing importance of interoperability – as more systems and technologies are developed, hospitals will need a way to make sense of all the data and information generated. Historically, healthcare organisations implemented one system to solve one problem and repeated the process. Now and in the future, hospitals will need a way to integrate technologies and simplify communication across the entire enterprise.

Security will continue to be a big focus and shape mHealth in the future. As hospitals continue to build out their mobility infrastructure with BYOD and mobile device management (MDM) strategies, it's likely we could see standardised legislation within Asia Pacific similar to HIPAA and the HITECH Act guidelines in the United States.

With the increased accessibility mobile devices bring, there will likely be a large focus on improving communications on all levels – among doctors, nurses, and patients. As more healthcare organisations implement electronic health records, patient engagement will continue to grow with patients taking a more proactive approach and accessing online portals to manage and monitor their health.

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