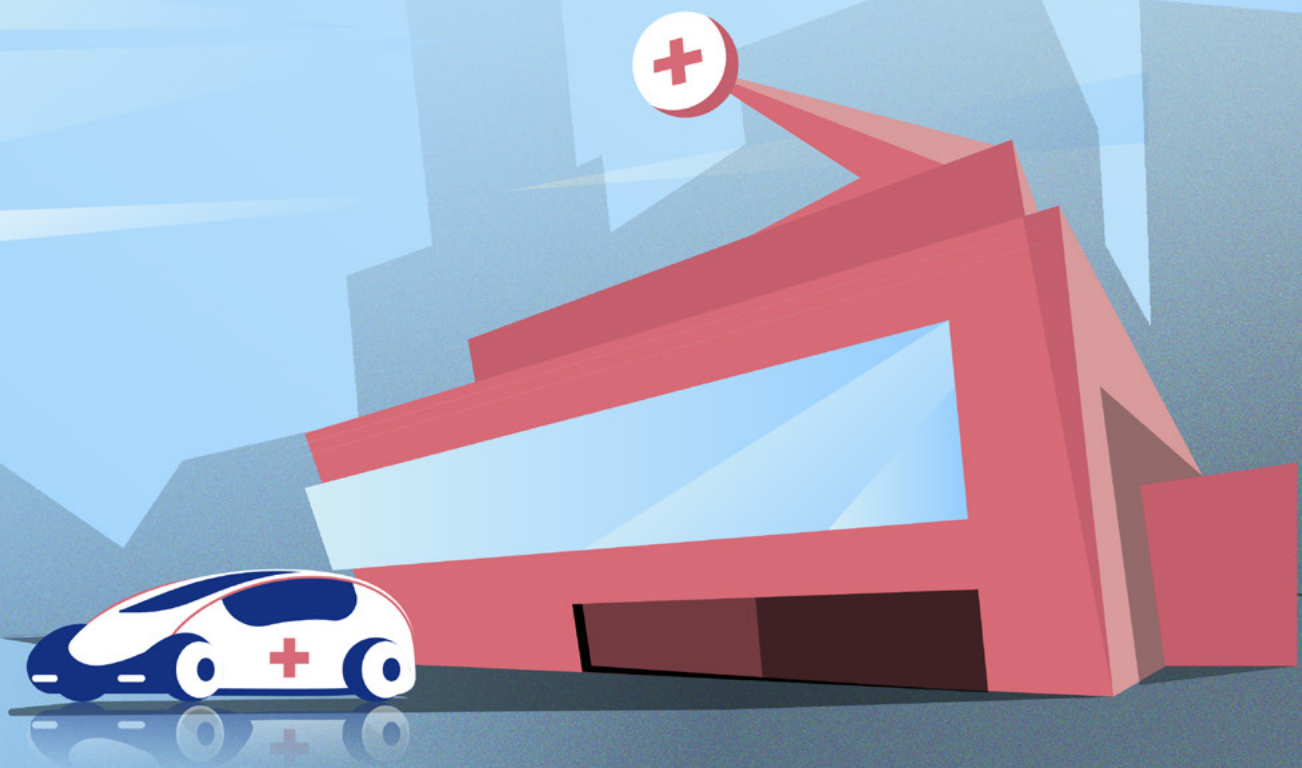


A GUIDE TO THE FUTURE OF HOSPITALS



THE MEDICAL FUTURIST

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A Guide To The Future Of Hospitals

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2022



Welcome message

Dear Reader,

Whenever I talk about the near future of medicine and healthcare, one of the first questions is about what we can expect from hospitals. Will there be hospitals at all by 2035? If so, what will be their role and how will we care for patients in the same buildings we have today?

No matter where you live on this planet, how wealthy you are or how rich your network is, you still have to go to a physical location we call the point-of-care to receive medical help with a huge range of issues. If you ask a medical professional working in one or a patient who has ever been to one, they will doubt if that place would be significantly different a decade from now.



We wrote this e-book to describe what we know today about the practical future of the point-of-care and what we, at The Medical Futurist, envision about their future role, state and promise of that place.

We think there will be hospitals even 30 years from now; however, their role will be different and they will cover a specific group of treatments and healthcare processes.

We hope this comprehensive review will arm policymakers, healthcare professionals and people on the business side of care to better see what is coming and what the hospital of the future will be like.

Dr. Bertalan Meskó

The Medical Futurist

Director of The Medical Futurist Institute

INTRODUCTION

In 1932, Dr. Holbrook described his vision for the future of hospitals in [a paper aptly titled 'The Ideal Hospital Of The Future'](#). In it, the author argued that hospitals will not need any radical changes in their diagnostic service nor in how they manage patients.

Indeed, nowadays, the average hospital and the healthcare experience it delivers share a similar template anywhere in the world. Those institutions currently represent the central point of healthcare where healthcare professionals, medical equipment and diagnostic tools can be found. Patients need to head there in order to get diagnosed, receive treatment, take blood tests and radiological scans, or retrieve medical data.

Most readers will find such an experience familiar; but they might also be familiar with recent changes in the delivery of healthcare, particularly precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Such changes mostly revolve around the integration of technologies with remote components such as [telemedicine](#) and [at-home lab tests](#) that bring healthcare outside of the confines of hospitals. Such new approaches to diagnostic service and the way patients are managed are becoming more prevalent.

Indeed, much has changed over the 90 years that have elapsed since the publication of Dr. Holbrook's vision; and at The Medical Futurist, we would argue that in the digital health era, hospitals are in dire need of changes. Changes in plural as these range from the design perspective to the roles of healthcare practitioners.

Make no mistake, we do not claim that with the adoption of digital health technologies, hospitals will become obsolete and that they will somehow operate solely on the cloud. Far from that, medical institutions will still be needed decades from today. People will still require acute care and they will turn to hospitals for these needs as well as for invasive procedures and for in-depth analyses that require bulky, specialised equipment stored in hospitals.

However, the roles of hospitals will be different in the future. Much of routine checkups and unnecessary in-person visits will be shifted online via telemedicine

consultations and A.I. algorithms. This will free up time and resources for the medical staff to focus on cases that require more prompt medical attention or invasive manoeuvres. In order to properly adopt these new functions, hospitals will require radical changes, as opposed to what Dr. Holbrook envisioned in 1932.

As such, we are publishing this e-book to guide anyone interested in building, designing, or simply understanding the future of hospitals or healthcare institutions in general. Across 7 chapters, we will explore the central point-of-care concept which will dictate the focus of those institutions, contemplate elements of hospital design through those lenses and analyse the technological trends that will determine hospitals' future.

Throughout these chapters, we also share the insights of design experts as well as medical staff who have adopted novel approaches to enhance the healthcare experience. To synthesise the content of this e-book, it will conclude with the depiction of a hospital from the future that adopts the approaches highlighted within.



1 THE CONCEPT OF THE POINT-OF-CARE

One of the key features of digital health technologies is that they democratise access to care, and with that they also bring a shift to the traditional concept of point of care. Conventionally, this meant delivering care by clinicians at the patient's bedside in a hospital. What digital health approaches now enable is taking a component of care delivery outside of the confines of healthcare institutions. This enables patients to become more proactive in the management of their health.

In fact, the new point-of-care concept in the digital health era will consist of two components, one outside of hospitals and hospitals themselves will retain the other component. While much of routine care will be offloaded outside of healthcare institutions, the latter will still have a crucial role to play. As mentioned earlier, they will adopt new roles focusing on disease prevention, acute care and surgical needs.