

Media release

20 November 2024



Avant calls for proactive regulation as AI scribe use by doctors gathers pace

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools for clinical notetaking is set to surge among doctors, according to research from Avant Mutual, Australia's leading medical indemnity provider.

The research, involving nearly 600 Avant members across Australia, was conducted in August 2024 and focused on doctor use and knowledge of AI across specialties and career stages.

Avant's Legal and Policy Adviser, Tracy Pickett said doctors were already using AI tools in small numbers, but there was significant interest in using AI scribes for clinical notetaking in future.

"Our research shows that 1 in 2 doctors are either currently using or want to use an AI scribe," Ms Pickett said.

"While 11% of doctors surveyed are already using an AI scribe, 39% of doctors reported they were likely to use an AI scribe in future.

"Similar levels of interest were reported across career stages, with almost half of doctors practising for more than 5 years (47%) and 6 in 10 of those practising for five years or less either using or likely to use an AI scribe.

"We also saw broad interest among the specialty groups, with at least half of each cohort (GPs 48%, surgeons 64%, physicians 61%) using or likely to use an AI scribe."

Ms Pickett said the research showed that doctors were attracted to using AI scribes by a combination of administrative efficiencies and the ability to focus on the patient.

"Doctors have indicated they are mainly using AI scribes to save time (88%) and focus more on their patients (72%), and because they were easy to use (53%)," she said.

"However, many doctors lack knowledge about AI generally – in fact, three in four doctors in our survey reported having a fair to poor knowledge of AI overall."

Ms Pickett said Avant was concerned about the challenges facing doctors as they balance clinical safety and efficacy, the pace of AI developments, and limited knowledge about how AI works and its risks.

"AI holds immense potential for healthcare, however patient safety must always remain paramount," she said.

"Added to this, using AI in healthcare introduces complex medico-legal, privacy and legal risks that existing regulatory frameworks are ill-equipped to address.

"AI scribes are a key example. These tools are not currently subject to any standards, making it difficult for doctors to assess whether they are safe or fit for purpose.

"It is critical that this gap is addressed, with mandatory minimum standards for all AI tools used in healthcare so that any AI products not regulated currently is subject to regulatory oversight.

"While GPs should be aware of their professional obligations when using any AI in practice, this must be in the context of a clear and robust regulatory framework that supports innovation and safeguards against potential harms as AI in healthcare continues to advance."

Tracy Pickett is speaking on the topic of AI, medico-legal risk and regulation: an indemnity insurer's perspective at the AI.Care 2024 conference on Wednesday 27 November 2024.

Avant position on AI in healthcare and medico-legal risks

Avant is calling for proactive policy actions by government to strengthen transparency, assign accountability and establish robust regulatory oversight and governance for AI in healthcare.

Mandatory minimum standards for all AI tools used in healthcare should be developed, so that any AI products not regulated currently would become subject to regulatory oversight. This includes AI scribes, consumer health products, digital mental health tools and any AI tools that suggest clinical findings or make recommendations that could lead to adverse patient outcomes if inaccurate or not acted upon.

Mandatory minimum regulatory standards should address:

- privacy and security
- transparency and explainability regarding how the tool works and how it has been trained
- record keeping, access to meta data and access to historical information for relevant time periods
- service agreements, including the appropriate use of disclaimers and indemnity clauses.
- safeguards to reduce the risk of patient harm, including monitoring and error and adverse event reporting
- insurance and indemnity cover.

More information on recommended policy actions is available in [Avant's position paper: AI in healthcare and medico-legal risks.](#)

Avant resources for doctors – [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\): what you need to know](#)

About Avant

Avant Mutual is a member-owned doctors' organisation and Australia's largest medical indemnity insurer, committed to supporting a sustainable health system that provides quality care to the Australian community. Our 90,000 members (more than half of Australia's doctors) are from all medical specialties and career stages and from every state and territory. Our products and services in the areas of insurance, lending, health and legal and practice management are all designed to support doctors in their professional and personal lives.

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