



AI AND MEDICINE

Let me open by stating clearly that I know very little about computer science and nothing about Artificial Intelligence (AI). I read with great interest the article “AI Poised to Revolutionize Surgery” that was in the June 2023 issue of the *American College of Surgeons Bulletin*. To try to understand some of this science, I had to do some reading and discovered that there has been a sharp rise in AI’s ability and uses. One of the reasons for the actors’ strike in California is fear that AI could replace them. So, I’m thinking: will AI replace me as a surgeon? On the IBM website (www.ibm.com/impact/ai-ethics) I learned that in 1950 Alan Turing (often called the father of computer science) asked, “Can computers think?” The IBM website explained that AI combines computer science and extensive datasets to solve problems and make predictions. Systems with more than three layers in a neural network (yes, that is what they call it) can do “deep” learning. They can generate realistic images and speech. It can “ingest” unstructured data and automatically determine what is more important and separate it from data from other sources.

What are some of the ways AI is currently working for you and me? If you have ever spoken to Siri, you are using AI. If you wonder why certain ads appear on your phone or computer, AI has determined what you might like or need for your upcoming plans, be it travel, a construction project, or simply your current shopping pattern. AI does not only have image recognition but based on image and video data it can take action. This ability allows it to drive your car and read the x-rays your physician ordered. Are you investing in the stock market? AI has probably made trades on your behalf and without your input. When I visited a relative’s dairy farm in Sweden, we watched cows being milked by AI; there was no human involvement in the entire process.



Since AI can recognize patterns, classify images, or detect objects or defects from ‘normal’, AI is most useful in the medical specialties of radiology, pathology, and dermatology. In one study it took 4 hours for radiologists to read through hundreds of x-rays while AI read the same number of x-rays in 90 seconds. All with similar accuracy. AI can analyze data to determine the risk and potential outcome of a surgical procedure. AI can watch surgery being performed and anticipate the next 15 to 30 seconds and give oversight or guidance to the surgeon. But this is what astounded me; the journal article I was reading stated that last year, at The Johns Hopkins University, the first laparoscopic surgery was performed *without human help*. The surgery involved reconnecting two ends of a pig intestine.* What will happen to the art of surgery!

How all this data is being used raises many ethical questions involving privacy, business practices, and government oversight.

* *Scientific American* 26 January 2022.

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H2O PROGRAM FOR KIDS AND ADOLESCENTS

Helping Heal with Others, or H2O, bereavement program for children (ages 6-18) and their families, is **Saturday, September 9, at 9:30 AM to noon at the Boys and Girls Club of Central NH, 55 Bradley Street in Concord.** H2O is held on the second Saturday of each month at the same time.

H2O is a monthly program that provides bereaved children (age 6-18) and their families with coping skills and peer support that enables them to experience and process their grief. Accompanying adults are requested to stay on site and participate in a concurrent, supportive program. Sessions may include art, music, creative and expressive activities, stress management, drumming, pet therapy and more.

Registration is required. Please call (603) 224-4093 or (800) 924-8620, ext. 82822 or visit www.granitevna.org.

SPOUSAL/PARTNER LOSS GROUP

Granite VNA Spousal/Partner Loss Group begins Tuesday, **September 12 from 4. to 5:30 p.m. in the parlor at Wesley United Methodist Church, 79 Clinton Street in Concord.**

This group offers a safe space for mutual support and understanding as well as an opportunity to share ideas and strategies that may be helpful in your grief journey.

Registration is required. All community members are welcome to attend. This program is offered at no charge. Masks optional. To register, call 603-224-4093, ext. 82828 or visit www.granitevna.org/griefsupport.

GRANITE VNA MONTHLY IMMUNIZATION CLINIC

Granite VNA offers a monthly Immunization Clinic for children and adults who are uninsured, underserved, and who have no access to these needed services in order to lead a healthy lifestyle.

The next clinic will be held on **Monday, September 11, at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church Outreach Center at 21 Centre Street in Concord from 1 to 4 p.m.** Appointments are required. The clinic is held on the first Monday of each month at the same time.

Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Please bring an immunization record with you.

Eligibility is determined by the NH Immunization Program screening tool. A fee of \$10 is requested for vaccine administration. For an appointment call **Granite VNA at (603) 224-4093 or (800) 924-8620, ext. 85815.**