

TRANSCRIPT

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Transcript: AMA Queensland President, Dr Nick Yim, ABC Radio Brisbane, *Drive with Spencer*, Monday 7 July 2025

Subjects: AI tools in medicine; ADHD medication shortage

SPENCER HOWSON: When you go to see your GP, or even a specialist, how would you feel if someone was listening into your conversation? Or something, if not someone? Hospitals and GPs are leaning more on AI or artificial intelligence technology. In particular, software that will transcribe conversations as they happen and then generate a medical note for a doctor to review and approve. Dr Nick Yim is President of the Australian Medical Association in Queensland. Dr Nick Yim, how is pressure taken off a doctor's workload if they use AI scribe technology?

DR NICK YIM: Good evening, Spencer. That's a really good question. We know that not just in medical fields, but across every industry now, we are seeing AI being utilised. In medicine in particular, we know that not every doctor, not every nurse are touch typists. We can't transcribe very quickly, I guess, our thoughts to paper. So this is where many practices are utilising AI scribes to generate that spoken word into an electronic form, which, as you can imagine, can save significant amounts of time. Often we are hearing people saving, say, 10 to 20 minutes per consultation sometimes.

SPENCER HOWSON: Are they asking patients for their permission to go down this path, or is it just sort of assumed and part of the consultation now?

DR NICK YIM: As part of the guidance from, currently, the regulatory bodies and also our medical indemnity, for every consultation if people are utilising AI scribes, patient consent is needed. So these AI scribes, they're a little bit different now to say historically you might have had a dictaphone, those are things where you transfer to a medical typist. These things are actually using internet and also AI. So that's the reason why consent is so important.

SPENCER HOWSON: So are there any concerns? I mean, AI still feels so new and unknown. Are there concerns with this technology, particularly in a health setting? I mean, are there checks and balances that the AI hasn't made an error, for example?

DR NICK YIM: So the key thing here with AI, it's an adjunct, so it definitely cannot be relied upon 100%. So that's the reason why the treating clinician still must review the translation or the transcription and then sign off on it finally. At the same time, we need to ensure that patient safety for their data remains paramount, which is the reasons why there are checks and balances in place to ensure that data itself remains in Australia and at the same time ensuring that patients' consent is obtained.

SPENCER HOWSON: That thing about where the data goes is something that I think we're all still struggling to understand, isn't it? I'm quite happy to use AI to ask for assistance with this or that. I've

been having a bit of fun lately creating cartoon images of friends, and others will say to me – “no, you can't do that. You're handing over all of your data to the AI machine, and then it'll do who knows what with it”. Do we have those concerns in the medical realm?

DR NICK YIM: Absolutely. So we've heard recently, [of] data breaches, whether it be in the healthcare sector or other sectors, so that is a great concern. We know that data is valuable, especially patient's data. This is the reason why data security is so important. But at the same time, we also must acknowledge that we have to move with the times. We know that there are huge benefits with technology and the data itself. We have to also realise that we ourselves as individuals, as consumers, we also share a lot of data, Facebook, social media, talking on the phones, internet chatting, all those type of things. So, it's also that fine balance that we have to be aware of as data security.

SPENCER HOWSON: It does feel like we've given up really societally on privacy, thanks to social media. And now AI comes along. Dr Nick Yim is here. He's the President of the Australian Medical Association in Queensland. Dr Nick Yim, I wanted to ask you, we've been hearing today about the shortage of ADHD medication. Let me play you this – Chris Owen, President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Queensland, speaking to Kelly Higgins-Devine on 612 ABC Brisbane *Mornings* today on the impact that this shortage is having.

CHRIS OWEN: It has certainly caused a lot of angst for pharmacists and their patients that they are trying to treat, particularly because this shortage has been happening for the better part of a year now and we've been seeing dribs and drabs of medications that are coming into the country, but it isn't a problem that we can solve easily by substitution or by compounding. So quite commonly, if the medication becomes unavailable but the raw ingredient is available, we can normally compound those medications and provide an alternative. This is one of those situations where the actual ingredient is the bit that's short. So having those compounding pharmacies do up those specialist medications isn't available in this particular time.

SPENCER HOWSON: That's Chris Owen from the Pharmacy Guild. Dr Nick Yim from AMA Queensland, from a GP perspective, how concerning is this shortage for patients who have ADHD?

DR NICK YIM: This medication shortage is concerning. We can acknowledge that it will cause a lot of stress for individual patients, and also pharmacists. So I echo Chris's thoughts. It's one of those challenges that if people are taking these medications that are implicated, it's really important to not wait until the final tablet to have that conversation with their prescriber – that could be their psychiatrist. If it's a child, maybe their pediatrician. If we're having challenges of accessing those specialists, have that conversation with their GP early, don't wait until it's too late when it's totally run out. It is frustrating for the medical community that we are seeing these shortages which is the bigger question is Australia, we do need a long-term medication supply strategy because this is unfortunately happening too often.

SPENCER HOWSON: These medications, ADHD medications, they're prescribed by specialists, and if a change in meds is needed due to a short supply, there are wait lists and there are costs associated with that. As I understand it, recently the New South Wales government announced an initiative which will allow GPs to prescribe ADHD meds if they undertake appropriate training. Is that something that you would like to see adopted in Queensland?

DR NICK YIM: This is something that we are working behind the scenes with our colleges, our training colleges. That's in general practice and also the specialist colleges. We do know that while access is really important, we also need to ensure that patient safety is also paramount. It's one of those situations, and we are working behind the scenes to ensure that we can improve access for our patients in the community.

SPENCER HOWSON: All right. Thanks for coming on this afternoon. Always appreciate your time.

DR NICK YIM: Thanks, Spencer, really appreciate it.

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