Educate patients about misleading AI-generated medical advice

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The AMA’s first policies on augmented intelligence (AI)—often called artificial intelligence—were adopted in 2018 and recognized the technology’s potential for enhancing patient and physician decision-making and improving health outcomes.

The process that began five years ago continues, as the AMA fine tunes its AI policies to ensure its positive aspects are funneled toward the benefit of patients and physicians while heightening awareness of the negative aspects that can cause harm.

“AI holds the promise of transforming medicine. We don’t want to be chasing technology. Rather, as scientists, we want to use our expertise to structure guidelines and guardrails to prevent unintended consequences, such as baking in bias and widening disparities, dissemination of incorrect medical advice, or spread of misinformation or disinformation,” said AMA Trustee Alexander Ding, MD, MS, MBA.

“We’re trying to look around the corner for our patients to understand the promise and limitations of AI. There is a lot of uncertainty about the direction and regulatory framework for this use of AI that has found its way into the day-to-day practice of medicine,” Dr. Ding said.

Three AI-related resolutions were introduced for consideration by the House of Delegates at the 2023 AMA Annual Meeting in Chicago. They were combined into one measure urging physicians to educate patients on benefits and risks and directing the AMA to work with the federal government to protect patients from false or misleading AI-generated medical advice.

Specifically, the AMA was directed to:

- Study and develop recommendations on the benefits of and unforeseen consequences to the medical profession of large-language models (LLMs) such as generative pretrained transformers (GPTs) and other augmented intelligence-generated medical advice or content.
• Propose appropriate state and federal regulations with a report back at the 2024 AMA Annual Meeting.
• Work with the federal government and other appropriate organizations to protect patients from false or misleading AI-generated medical advice.
• Support publishing groups and scientific journals to establish guidelines to regulate the use of augmented intelligence in scientific publications that include detailing the use of augmented intelligence in the methods and exclusion of augmented intelligence systems as authors and the responsibility of authors to validate veracity of any text generated by augmented intelligence.

Delegates also adopted policy encouraging physicians to educate patients about the benefits and risks of consumer-facing LLMs including GPTs.

“Moving toward creation of consensus principles, standards and regulatory requirements will help ensure safe, effective, unbiased and ethical AI technologies” such as LLMs and GPTs, Dr. Ding said. “We are entering this brave new world with our eyes wide open and our minds engaged.”

Read about the other highlights from the 2023 AMA Annual Meeting.