

Pharmacists Urged to Co-opt AI, Not Compete with It

Event Context

On the occasion of *World Pharmacists' Day* in Bengaluru, healthcare and pharmacy experts emphasized the critical role of artificial intelligence (AI) in transforming patient care, medicine dispensing, and healthcare delivery.

Role of Pharmacists in a Changing Landscape

Experts highlighted that pharmacists remain an irreplaceable part of the healthcare system due to their direct interaction with patients, ability to counsel on medicines, and role in ensuring safe drug use.

- Pharmacists are key in building patient trust.
 - They act as a bridge between doctors and patients.
 - Their skills go beyond simply dispensing medicines.
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AI as a Partner, Not a Competitor

The central message of the discussion was that pharmacists should embrace AI tools rather than fear them as rivals.

- AI can support pharmacists in tasks such as drug interaction checks, inventory management, personalized drug dosing, and patient record analysis.

- By using AI, pharmacists can save time on routine processes and focus more on patient counselling and clinical services.
 - Experts warned that resisting AI adoption could risk pharmacists being sidelined in a fast-changing health ecosystem.
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Enhancing Patient Care with AI

AI integration is expected to improve patient interactions by:

- Providing evidence-based drug information instantly.
 - Flagging potential adverse drug reactions before dispensing.
 - Offering personalized guidance based on patient history.
 - Reducing medication errors.
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Future of Pharmacy in India

India, with its rapidly expanding digital health infrastructure, offers fertile ground for integrating AI in pharmacy practice.

- Telemedicine, e-pharmacy platforms, and government digital health missions are already paving the way.
- Pharmacists who adopt AI tools can expand their role from dispensers to healthcare advisors.
- Collaboration between human expertise and AI intelligence is seen as the most effective model for future pharmacy practice.

✅ **Key Takeaway:** Experts strongly encouraged Indian pharmacists to view AI as a powerful partner that can amplify their role, improve efficiency, and enhance patient outcomes, rather than as a competitor threatening their professional relevance.