How speech recognition is addressing the real cost of NHS bed shortages and DTOCs

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, March 30, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With the NHS struggling to meet the demands of an ageing population, complex discharge processes, and widespread bed shortages, new technology has an important role to play in safeguarding patient outcomes.
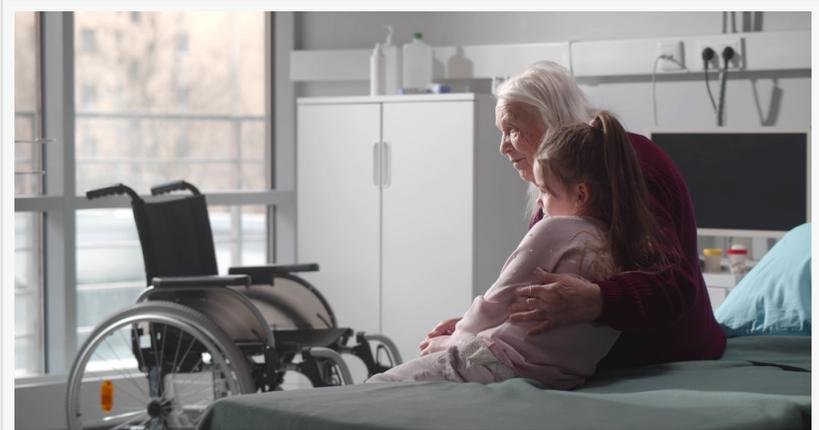
The past few years have been incredibly challenging for the NHS, with the pandemic and heightened demand bringing longstanding problems into sharp, urgent focus. Bed shortages continue to be a major issue, with British Medical Association data from December 2022 reporting that occupancy rates consistently exceed safe levels. Meanwhile, Delayed Transfers of Care (DTOCs) create unnecessary bottlenecks, with patients occupying beds when they are clinically ready to be discharged or transferred.

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> **Technology and changes in ways of working have the potential to reduce bed occupancy rates and improve care in a more sustainable way - this transformation is only possible if it makes financial sense"**
>
> *Shiraz Austin - MD at Scribetech (UK) Ltd & Co-Founder of Augnito*

For NHS Trusts, this creates a significant, largely unnecessary cost – one that's hard to immediately address by adding new bed stocks. That's why Scribetech, the co-creators of AI speech recognition solution Augnito, are working to help Trusts understand the potential of innovative new technology.

"For decades, the NHS has tried to address bed stock and occupancy issues by adding more beds, but we have consistently seen that it's almost impossible to keep up with demand" stated Shiraz Austin, Managing Director at Scribetech and Co-Founder of Augnito. "Technology and changes in ways of working have the potential to reduce

occupancy rates and improve care in a way that's more sustainable. But this transformation is only possible if it makes financial sense."

Estimating the financial cost of DTOCs and the bed shortage is difficult. Department of Health figures put the cost of a DTOC bed at £400/day, while Age UK report 2019 costs of £346/day. Using a forgiving cost of £350/day, this implies a bill in excess of £54 million just for the delayed days in February 2020, when DTOC metrics were last reported.

[Speech recognition technology like Augnito can't immediately eliminate all](link) DTOCs, but it can deliver consistent, incremental improvements to the workflows of multidisciplinary teams (MDTs). With real time dictation and transcription in any platform or dedicated desktop and smartphone applications, healthcare professionals can reduce the risk of delays arising from inaccurate records, lost records, and breakdowns in communication.

Austin continued: "The financial outlook is clear: the cost of new technology is significantly less than the cost of delays and low bed stocks. The cost of a single extra bed per day is 10 times the cost of an Augnito licence for a month. But that commercial reality is just one part of the picture. There's a human cost that must also be considered."

While delays and occupied beds affect every patient – and, indeed, the entire healthcare system including social care – some particularly vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected. December 2021 saw intensive care beds for children reach record occupancy of 89% across the country. Meanwhile, older patients are particularly at risk given the typical complexity of their discharge or transfer to other providers.

When paediatric beds simply aren't available or elderly patients are kept on wards for weeks, even months after they're ready to be transferred, their experience is resoundingly negative. They're unable to receive the care that is appropriate, when it is required, in the right setting. In some cases, this comes with a very real and measurable impact on outcomes.

Austin concluded: "Augnito is designed to work for NHS Trusts – a cloud-hosted technology that's significantly lower in cost than unnecessary delays and can be implemented quickly and easily. But it's also designed to empower healthcare professionals and multidisciplinary teams to work efficiently, so they can act based on what patients need, without being limited by processes and old, outdated workflows."

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Notes to editors
Full blog posts referenced in this media alert:
https://www.scribetech.co.uk/2023/02/28/how-speech-recognition-technology-can-support-a-

national-bed-shortage/
https://www.scribetech.co.uk/2023/03/15/reducing-dtoc-on-vulnerable-patients/

About Scribetech and the Augnito solution
Augnito is a secure, cloud-based, AI-driven clinical speech recognition product suite. It offers fast, easy ways to capture live clinical data on any device with 99.3% accuracy, support for multiple medical specialities, and no need for voice profile training. Augnito brings seamless speech recognition to daily workflows and third-party clinical systems, turning medical information into clinical documentation and making healthcare intelligence securely accessible everywhere. Augnito was co-developed by Scribetech, a clinical voice solutions innovator, fusing 20 years of transcription and digital dictation services to the NHS, speech-to-text, and clinical coding solutions for the healthcare sector, and its own speech recognition engine with advanced voice AI technology.

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