

Navigating the post-COVID world: how digital health solutions can help

As the health service responds to the various backlogs that have developed as a result of the ongoing pandemic, Chris Hudson provides a brief overview of Roche digital solutions and how they facilitate better patient care.

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has changed many aspects of healthcare, from diagnosis to treatment. While there has been much disruption, with healthcare resources redeployed to fight the virus, there have been some unexpected benefits too. The pandemic has highlighted the need for agile and flexible healthcare, and accelerated the demand for alternative care solutions. From virtual GP appointments to at-home care solutions for cancer patients, innovation has been brought to the fore.¹

It's not just patients who benefit from this but the wider healthcare system. The need for social distancing and remote working has had an impact on the ways in which healthcare professionals interact. Multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) are a key feature of care across many different disease areas, especially cancer, where MDTs have long been the gold standard of patient care.² Their meetings provide opportunity for a collaborative approach; they bring together oncology, radiology and pathology specialists to aid in decision-making and improve care coordination, to examine biopsies and discuss treatment options. However, they can be resource-intensive, requiring 15 or more staff attending weekly meetings.³

Facilitating a personalised approach to patient care

While in-person meetings have been difficult over the last 12 months, digital solutions like Roche's NAVIFY Tumor Board provide a simple way to navigate socially-distanced care in a risk-free environment with added efficiency. The cloud-based workflow product securely integrates and displays relevant aggregated data into a single, holistic patient dashboard for oncology care teams to review, align and decide on the optimal treatment for the patient.



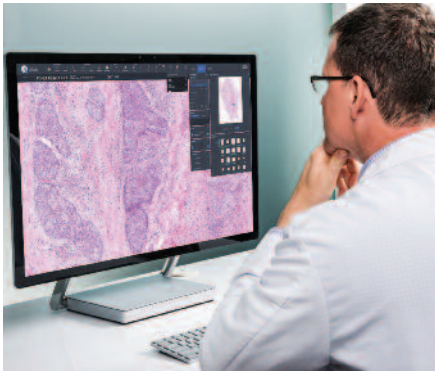
Digital solutions provide a simple way to navigate socially-distanced care through an online multidisciplinary team meeting in a risk-free environment with added efficiency.

Being cloud-based, it helps move towards the recommendation in the NHS Long Term Plan that healthcare providers "advance to a core level of digitisation by 2024".⁴ It enables healthcare professionals to collaborate, share information about individual cancer patients, and make decisions about this most complex of diseases.

Making timely and informed clinical decisions is vital to optimise patient care. NAVIFY Clinical Decision Support apps are a way of helping medical teams access clinical trial information and the very latest guidance on best practice. This can help ensure that they are equipped to make decisions on each patient's treatment based on the most up-to-date thinking and evidence. It supports a more personalised approach to each patient's cancer diagnosis and their treatment needs. Furthermore, it helps to keep oncologists

and their MDTs on top of the latest scientific developments. These apps integrate fully with the NAVIFY Tumor Board, providing consistency of evidence and information on which treatment and care decisions are based.

COVID-19 has demanded advances in science and technologies like never before, and as we emerge from the pandemic there is a real opportunity to maintain this pace of innovation and change. The NAVIFY Decision Support portfolio allows teams to access real-time guidelines, publications and clinical trial matches as needed, to help them make the best decisions for patients based on the latest information. By bringing



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together all relevant patient data into one dashboard, the NAVIFY Decision Support portfolio enables an holistic view of each patient, so that their treatment plan can be tracked.

Embracing digital solutions


The NHS is now facing the challenge of managing the considerable backlog of patients awaiting diagnosis and treatment, including for cancer, which has built up while COVID-19 has been the priority. Forward-planning, consistency and collaboration across the healthcare systems is going to be more important

than ever, and patient-centred care will have a powerful role to play. Now is the time when the adoption of new solutions and different ways of working can and should come into their own and drive even more efficient, pragmatic and innovative approaches to delivering the very best care to patients.

Digital solutions are already the norm in so many areas of our lives and in healthcare settings the benefits are far-reaching and potentially life-saving. We must embrace the lessons of the pandemic, support our health service to move towards a digital-first approach to patient care and aspire to do now what patients need next.

About Roche Diagnostics

Roche Diagnostics is a division of Roche. It develops and integrates diagnostic solutions that address the challenges of today and anticipate the needs of tomorrow. In more than 100 countries, the company offers the industry's most comprehensive *in vitro* diagnostics solutions, covering molecular diagnostics, clinical chemistry and immunoassays, tissue diagnostics, point-of-care testing,

patient self-testing, next-generation sequencing, and laboratory automation and IT, and decision-support solutions. 

References

- 1 NHS England. 'COVID-friendly' cancer care at home extended for more patients. 2021 (www.england.nhs.uk/2021/03/covid-friendly-cancer-care-at-home-extended-for-more-patients/).
- 2 NHS England and NHS Improvement. *Streamlining Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings Guidance for Cancer Alliances*. NHS Gateway reference number: 000590. 2020 (www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/multi-disciplinary-team-streamlining-guidance.pdf).
- 3 Cancer Research UK. *Meeting Patients' Needs: Improving the Effectiveness of Multidisciplinary Team Meetings in Cancer Services*. 2017 (www.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/full_report_meeting_patients_needs_improving_the_effectiveness_of_multidisciplinary_team_meetings_.pdf).
- 4 NHS Long Term Plan (www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/nhs-long-term-plan-version-1.2.pdf).

Chris Hudson is Director of Access and Innovation at Roche Diagnostics UK and Ireland
For more information, contact Roche Diagnostics or visit www.navify.com

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