



Q&A with Dr. David Whitehouse

CMO at UST Global

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Dr. David Whitehouse is the Chief Medical Officer at UST Global, a multinational provider of IT services and solutions, where he uses his clinical and health systems experience and insights to help clients understand the significance, influence, and possibilities of technology advances. He recently spoke with DOTmed HCB News about the ways technology is changing health care and the ways facilities need to adjust in order to remain competitive.

DOTmed News: There's been a lot of talk about the changes brought about by health reform. Is that the biggest influence on healthcare today?

David Whitehouse: It's certainly one of them. But the explosive advances in material science, which have fueled the possibilities in wearables and digestibles, really herald the dawn of data driven medicine. We should add to that biological advances in genetics and molecular biology, which are making personalized medicine a reality. Meanwhile, cognitive computing driven by analytic agents such as IBM's Watson offer a level of insight we have not previously seen.

DOTmed News: What are some examples of the other influences?

DW: There is a real sense that digital transformation is reshaping medicine to be genuinely consumer focused. Consumer-centric care will create greater convenience, empower better understanding, and engage everybody to become true guardians and advocates for their own health.

That shift, fueled by digital technology, makes possible a whole range of well-managed health assets—emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

DOTmed News: In your view, are we paying too much attention to some of these factors and not enough to others?

DW: The plethora of new health care apps hoping to solve everything from price transparency to diabetes management. Some promise to monitor my contribution to maintaining or improving my health, from exercise to diet to meditation. These proliferating apps are fragmented, overwhelming, and in the end just frustrating.

What I want is the universal, one-touch platform for health—health advice, medical knowledge, appointment scheduler, reminders for my meds, transport info to the physician's office. I want it to track how I pay for doctor's visits, track my health status, and analyze the interventions I've received and the outcomes they achieved. That is actually what we are working on at UST with our approach to "Health Karma," an all-in-one solution on the smartphone.

DOTmed News: You mentioned "consumer-centric" care before. Can you say more about that? Any specific examples?

DW: Yes, people want convenience. When a new pain or something frightens them, they want reassurance and, if necessary, a plan. The new online services like MDLive, Teladoc, or "talk to a pharmacist" are making that possible and accessible. Add to that the growth of retail medicine in stores like Walmart, Rite Aid, or CVS, where the advice and care is delivered where you are, when you're available. With all these front-line resources, we have a far better triage capacity than ever before.

DOTmed News: How are some industries or even individual businesses adjusting their practices to compete in the health care field?

DW: Providers and facilities are reorienting themselves to the service, cost, and quality needs of the empowered consumer. They understand that as

consumers increase their out-of-pocket spending they will exercise choices, and will likely opt for more virtual delivery.

Pharmacies and stores will realize that they have a real contribution to making health care accessible where people live their lives, and they will use the opportunity to engage people in dialogues around health and beauty, health and fitness, and health and travel.

As medicine itself both becomes more personalized and more data driven, it will require our caregivers to be trained in new ways. Those core skills that cannot be taught—I'm thinking of empathy, integrity, and patience—are critical to conducting person-centered interactions with the sickest patients.

DOTmed News: What are the key things businesses must keep in mind in order to thrive in the post-reform healthcare market?

DW: They can be summed up as follows: What is easy gets done. You cannot manage what you cannot measure. 50 percent of health costs are driven by behavioral choices.

Our lives are getting more complicated; we yearn for simplicity but are terrified of being taken advantage of. Healthcare businesses need to make us feel empowered with knowledge, explanation, and support.

Powerful health care will seek to understand humans as they cope with health and sickness, yearn for purpose, and look for happiness for themselves and those they love. If as a business you never forget that, you may find yourself well rewarded; lose sight of that and you may have success but it will be short-lived.