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MEDIA RELEASE

NHS regional plans fail to recognise value of medical technology

Report by the Medical Technology Group warns that the NHS is in danger of missing an opportunity to harness the power of technology

Nine out of ten regional NHS plans fail to pay enough attention to the role of medical technology, according to a new report by the Medical Technology Group. It found that only four of the 44 regional NHS plans include any meaningful reference to the use of innovative technology, despite NHS England making it a requirement in its guidelines.

Analysis of the regional NHS plans in the Medical Technology Group's new report 'STPs and the use of technology', reveals that the vast majority of the regional organisations set up to implement the NHS's Five Year Forward View lack strategic planning around the use of devices and technology. This is despite technology being widely recognised by NHS England as a priority in the creation of new regional systems.

For example, one of the 60 questions posed by NHS England asked how regions would be at the forefront of science, research and innovation and questioned how they would embrace breakthroughs in genomics, precision medicine and diagnostics over the next five years. None of the 44 plans addressed the question effectively. Where a response was given, it rarely included much detail. The West Yorkshire and Harrogate plan for example simply said: "Our integration 'pioneers' are joining up health and care. West Yorkshire and Harrogate will be an international destination for health innovation."

Very few STPs made any reference to the need to use innovative medical technology. Those that did included the West Yorkshire and Harrogate, South East London and Surrey Heartlands plans. For example, South East London stated: "We will work closely with clinical colleagues and partners to bring forward system-wide benefits to improve the value that the NHS gets from our significant investment in high cost drugs and devices."

The MTG report also raises concerns about the focus placed on the Carter Review in the regional plans. The group warns that, alongside the lack of clear plans for the use of innovative medical

technology, if an 'overly aggressive focus on unit cost' is the key decision factor when deciding which technology to use, NHS organisations could miss out on the potential savings on offer.

On a positive note however, the MTG's analysis found that the need to improve the use of digital technology is well covered by the plans. NHS England set out specific goals to be achieved by 2020, including that 95 percent of GP patients should be offered an e-consultation and other digital services, and that 95 percent of tests should be digitally transferred between NHS organisations.

Bedfordshire, Luton, and Milton Keynes STP for example, said that it would use technology to:

"Transform our ability to communicate with each other, for example by having shared digital records that can be easily accessed by patients and clinicians alike, using mobile technology (e.g. apps) for better coordinated care."

Barbara Harpham, chair of the Medical Technology Group, said: "While the focus on the greater use of digital technology to improve services for patients is encouraging, all but a tiny handful of regional NHS plans have failed to address the need for innovation and technology to improve patient outcomes.

"Attempting to retrofit technology to pathway and systems will not work. Regional NHS organisations must seize the unique opportunity to re-evaluate the use of technology and take full advantage of its possibilities. Until now, NHS budgets fail to encourage investment in one part of the system if it leads to savings in another. For example, advanced therapies in an operating theatre can lead to savings in the number of bed stays as patient recovery times are shorter. Sadly, the majority of regional plans are at risk of missing out on the chance of a lifetime to tackle these perverse incentives."

The MTG report makes seven recommendations to ensure that healthcare systems assess, procure, commission and deliver technology-based treatments effectively:

1. Break down budget silos: Joint working should ensure the benefits of investing in technology are realised, even when they are accrued in a different part of the system.
2. Ensure local commissioners follow national guidance: Regional NHS organisations should ensure national guidance and policies on the use of technology is followed duplication in assessment is avoided.
3. Embrace technology to integrate: Regional organisations are ideally placed to ensure the right technology is used in the right place and should look at the total system cost of its use.

ABHI, AdvaMed, AntiCoagulation Europe, ARMA, Arrhythmia Alliance, Arthritis Care, Atrial Fibrillation Association, BD, British Kidney Patient Association, Boston Scientific, British Cardiac Patients Association, C R Bard, Cardiomyopathy UK, Coloplast, Diabetes UK, Edwards Lifesciences, Eucomed, FABLE, FEmISA, Group B Strep Support, Heart Research UK, Heart Valve Voice, ICD Group, INPUT, Insightec, International Alliance of Patients' Organizations, Intuitive Surgical, JDRF, Nevro, Johnson & Johnson, Lindsay Leg Club Foundation, Medtronic, National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society, Pancreatic Cancer UK, Pelvic Pain Support Network, Pumping Marvellous, Roche Diagnostics, SADS UK, Smith & Nephew, Smiths Medical, St Jude Medical, STARS, Stryker, The Circulation Foundation, The Patients Association, The Somerville Foundation



4. Develop a modern workforce: the workforce should be equipped to deliver modern healthcare and a workforce strategy should be linked to technology needs.
5. Embed a strategic approach to procurement: procurement mechanisms should focus on the full value of medical devices, not the upfront cost.
6. Alignment of national initiatives: It is critical that Government initiatives are implemented side-by-side and at the same pace across relevant organisations.
7. Duty to innovate: NHS England should ensure regional organisations have a strategic plan for the use of technology and a named individual responsible for reporting on progress.

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Notes to editors

Regional NHS organisations / About the report

The Medical Technology Group (MTG) analysed all 44 of the Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs), which set out plans for revolutionising local healthcare systems and delivering the NHS Five Year Forward View, published by NHS England Chief Executive Simon Stevens in 2014. The original STP documents vary in length and detail but are designed to clarify the strategic objectives in each geographical area. As some STPs begin to evolve into Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships and Integrated Care Systems in order to implement the plans, the MTG report examines what the regional NHS organisations need to do to ensure that innovation is at the heart of the strategy and that patients can get access to the technology they need.

The report will be available for download from mtg.org.uk/spotlight-reports from November 15.

About the Medical Technology Group www.mtg.org.uk

The Medical Technology Group (MTG) is a coalition of patient groups, research charities and medical device manufacturers working to make medical technologies available to everyone who needs them. Uptake of medical technology in the UK is not as good as it should be, given its great potential to provide value for money to the NHS, patients and taxpayers. The MTG believes that patients and clinicians need better information about medical technologies so that they can make informed choices about their medical care.