# *How the* HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY CAN HARNESS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Clermont's Chairman *Richard Chandler* explains how innovative technology is central to meeting global demand for treatment.
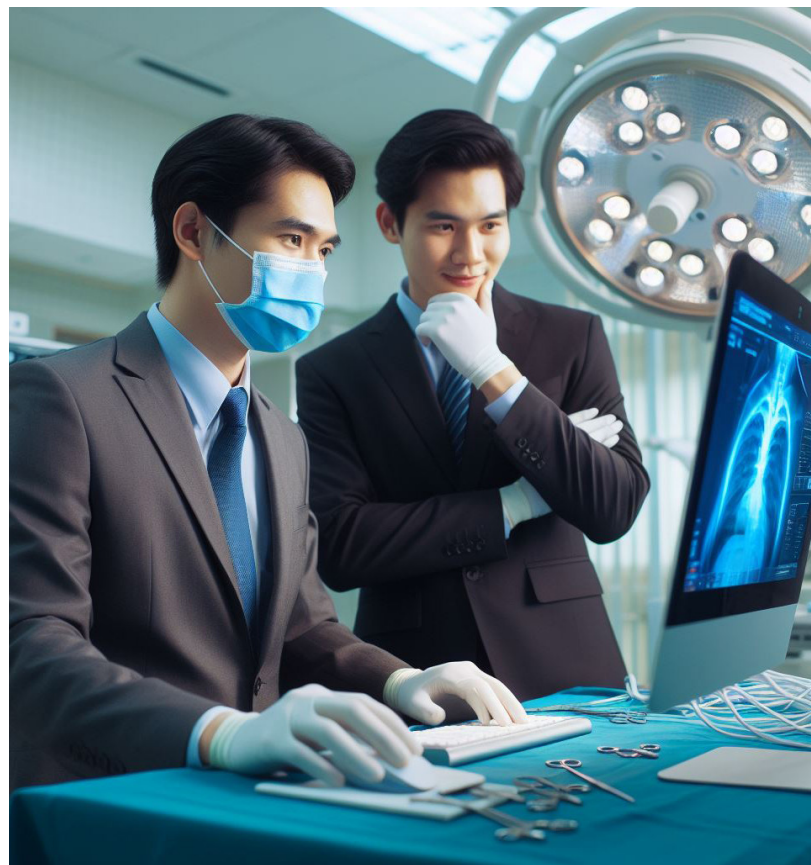


An AI-created image of how new technology might transform hospitals, produced by OpenAI's DALL-E text-to-image model.

## AI: Greeted with Enthusiasm and Fear

New technology is typically greeted with a mixture of enthusiasm and fear. Artificial intelligence (AI) has been no different. Predictions for its transformative impact have ranged from utopian visions of a work-free world to doom-laden threats of "civilisation destruction", to quote Elon Musk.

Capital markets certainly seem to share the belief that this is an epochal moment. The S&P 500 reached a series of record highs in the early months of 2024. NVIDIA, which specialises in AI chips, has led the way with an astonishing rise in its market capitalisation from US$ 280 billion in October 2022 to around US$ 2.3 trillion by March 2024.[1]

### The Proper Role for AI: A Co-pilot, not a Pilot

While AI seems here to stay, less clear is how these advances in technology can be usefully harnessed. Bill Gates once said, "The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency."

The lesson is that AI will not solve all our problems – and using it inappropriately will create more costs than benefits. Research published in September 2023 by Harvard Business School showed that using AI can improve workers' performance by as much as 40% – but only if it is used within the boundaries of its capabilities. When AI was used outside its lane, the workers' performance dropped by an average 19 percentage points.[2]

Gates's company, Microsoft, has named its AI tool "Co-pilot". It is an apt piece of branding. AI's greatest potential lies in being used as an aid to support human beings – not in replacing them entirely, as some excitable commentators have suggested.

### Global Demand for Healthcare is Booming

Taking this clear-eyed view does not mean pouring scorn on the potential of AI. As a tool to help people boost their productivity, it holds exciting promise.

The sector that may benefit the most and have the greatest impact on lives around the world is healthcare. As the world's population grows more affluent and, in many countries, begins to age, demand for healthcare is

set to rise rapidly, exacerbating existing challenges. Nearly two thirds of people around the world already believe their healthcare system is overstretched, according to the Ipsos Global Health Monitor.[3] The World Health Organization (WHO) has predicted a global shortfall of 10 million healthcare workers by 2030.[4]

### AI and Healthcare, a Perfect Match

Diagnostics and scanning have provided early success stories, as two case studies demonstrate. At Cedars-Sinai Hospital in the U.S., researchers have developed a system that can identify early signs of pancreatic cancer from CT scans with 86% accuracy up to three years earlier than doctors.[5] Siemens Healthineers, a German medical devices company, has used AI-powered image-reconstruction technology to reduce the time it takes to complete a brain scan by up to 70%.[6]

AI is also being deployed in drug discovery and development, including the production of new molecules, data analysis, and the design of clinical trials. It typically takes 12 to 15 years to bring a drug to market, a time that could be cut by 25-50% according to research from Boston Consulting Group.[7]

These are just some of a range of potential applications. In public health, language processing has been used to track the outbreaks of pathogens by monitoring local news reports for mentions of certain illnesses. Chatbots have

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been developed that can help to triage patients. AI solutions for supply chains and manufacturing, administration, and the automation and optimisation of routine work promise to enhance productivity across the board.

In all of this, the vast reams of information produced within healthcare offer an invaluable resource. The success of AI models relies on the scale and reliability of the data used to train them. By 2025, global healthcare data is predicted exceed 10 zettabytes, the equivalent of 10 trillion gigabytes.[8] Harnessing this array of information – and doing so while respecting patient confidentiality, a commonly raised concern – is a challenge but also an exceptional opportunity.

Richard Chandler at Hoan My Saigon Hospital with Vietnam's first GE Healthcare 3.0 Tesla SIGNA Hero MRI system, which employs deep-learning artificial intelligence technology, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam, May 2024.

### Business is More Trusted to Innovate than Government

In March 2024, the cover story of *The Economist* magazine said, "Much of the burden for boosting healthcare falls on governments and regulators. However, companies have a part to play, too." This is a common view, but it downplays the essential role of business in this transition. While the regulation of AI has been a focus for governments, its deployment is where business is primed to lead.

The 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer, a comprehensive report surveying people across 28 countries, found that businesses are the most trusted institution for integrating new innovations into society, ahead of both NGOs and government.[9]

As well as the most trusted, businesses are the best equipped. History shows that leaps in living standards come about through great commercial innovations, from the technology of the industrial revolution to the global spread of the iPhone. Businesses can create scalable, sustainable transformation in ways that government and philanthropy simply cannot. For AI to have its greatest impact, it needs to be adopted and championed by business.

### Hoan My: Leading the Healthcare Industry

At Clermont, our purpose is to harness the goodness of business to create a better world. Hoan My, our healthcare company in Vietnam, is the country's leading and largest private healthcare provider. With 14 hospitals and six clinics, it serves more than five million patient visits annually.

Vietnam is following the global trend for greater prosperity and an ageing population. The government
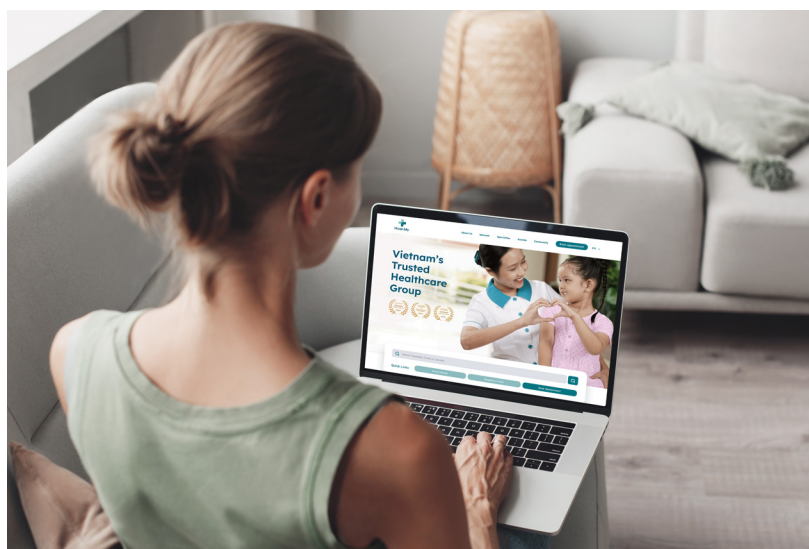


The new Hoan My home page, showcasing user-centric design for a streamlined experience.

has recognised the importance of private businesses in meeting the growing need for healthcare. Its Master Plan on the healthcare network, released in February 2024, targets private enterprises supplying 25% of hospital beds by 2050.[10] The groundwork is also being laid for a new era of innovation, with the country ranked 59th in the world in the 2023 AI Readiness Index published by Oxford Insights.[11]

Hoan My opened Vietnam's first private hospital in 1999 and in the decades since it has continued to innovate to remain relevant to culture and to provide an industry-leading service. Over the last five years, we have transformed our digital offering, including the launch of Danh Y (Vietnamese for "Prestigious Doctor"), the company's integrated healthcare app.

Today, I am even more excited about the opportunities that AI offers. We will start by improving diagnostic accuracy and patient care while reducing costs – but the days of holographic doctors, supporting their human colleagues, may not be so far away. As long as we can crack an algorithm for the perfect bedside manner, it promises to be an exhilarating journey.



A nurse and a patient at Hoan My Thu Duc Hospital, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, August 2023.

*Richard F. Chandler*

**RICHARD CHANDLER**
*Founder and Chairman, Clermont Group*

## Endnotes

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