



VBHC & Digital Transformation: Technology, and Digital Health Leveraging Healthcare Sustainability



Interview with Anne Geubelle

In an insightful exploration of the evolving healthcare landscape, Anne Geubelle, CEO of Prologica and a leading Value-Based Health Care (VBHC) expert in Portugal, sheds light on the transformative synergy between VBHC and digital health advancements. This interview delves into how digital transformation—encompassing electronic medical records, AI diagnostics, and telehealth—can significantly bolster VBHC’s aim for cost-effective, patient-centered care. Geubelle navigates us through the opportunities and hurdles presented by digital technologies in enhancing healthcare sustainability and patient outcomes, providing a comprehensive overview of integrating technological innovations within the VBHC framework to pave the way for a more efficient and equitable healthcare system.

Anne, we’re truly grateful for your time and eager to delve into your insights today, as a leading figure in VBHC, especially within Portugal’s unique healthcare landscape. To set the stage for our conversation, could you elucidate how digital transformation serves as the foundation for VBHC principles, notably in enhancing patient outcomes and delivering greater value?

Digital transformation plays a crucial role in supporting the principles of Value-Based Healthcare. The scalability of value transformation is heavily reliant on technology, as it enables access to relevant information scattered across different systems. Building a fully interoperable IT ecosystem is essential for implementing VBHC initiatives as well as incorporating data analytic tools for comprehensive data analysis.

Following up on that, are there specific digital initiatives that have notably shifted healthcare towards value and better patient outcomes?

Various digital initiatives, such as telehealth and remote patient monitoring, have successfully shifted the focus to value and patient outcomes. These initiatives have notably increased access to care, particularly benefiting patients managing chronic diseases. Real-time availability of clinical information collected through these technological solutions is crucial for informed decision-making by healthcare professionals.

The challenge remains the integration of all this new technology into clinical workflows. This integration requires the development of new procedures. It is about seamlessly incorporating solution data output or

technology into existing processes, establishing follow-up protocols for clinical teams in order to ensure patients get feedback and perceive the benefits of providing information about their health statuses. Only this will ensure patient sustained engagement.

Moving into the realm of big data, how do you see its application in healthcare aiding the VBHC agenda, particularly in achieving more personalized and patient-centered care?

Once again, there is no doubt that the use of big data and data analytics in healthcare is essential for a more personalized and patient-centered medicine. From a macro perspective, it will enable further stratification and segmentation of the population based on risk profiles. We will be able to establish targeted programs with the benefits of better-utilized resources and more relevant interventions.

At the patient level, healthcare professionals will have access to large quantities of clinical, genetic, and socio-economic data, allowing them to define personalized and more effective treatment plans with fewer side effects. Not to mention the ability of data analytics to develop a comprehensive predictive approach that facilitates early interventions aligned with the preventive aspect of the VBHC concept. Additionally, the mass analysis of health outcome data will help identify best practices and standardize protocols, resulting in a reduction of unwanted variations in care delivery, ensuring that patients receive consistent and high-quality care, which is a fundamental principle of VBHC.

However, we have to be clearly aware that in order to get all these capabilities that will definitively change the way we approach healthcare, we urgently need to build a strong data strategy within the healthcare organizations that include not only data infrastructure but data processes and data analysis capabilities. It

is more about changing the existing culture in the healthcare sector than simply implementing new systems. And this is where the real challenge begins – changing the culture!



Digital tools have been pivotal in transforming healthcare delivery. Could you give examples of how these tools have improved accessibility and operational efficiency within the VBHC model and their direct impact on patient outcomes?

When it comes to implementing value-based healthcare initiatives, digital tools and platforms have brought about a transformation, leading to changes in the accessibility and effectiveness of healthcare delivery. One of the most notable improvements is telehealth services. Telehealth platforms have not only broken down geographic barriers but also transformed the way patients access healthcare. The ability to consult remotely with healthcare providers has not only increased accessibility but has also made scheduling appointments easier, reduced wait times, and optimized healthcare providers' schedules. On the patients' side, they feel more supported and comfortable in the management of their clinical conditions, mainly when we are talking about patients with chronic health conditions who usually have more hospital interactions.

Mobile apps have also empowered patients to actively participate in their healthcare journey, contributing to improving self-monitoring and facilitating the reporting of health statuses. Clearly, the impact of these digital tools in terms of patient outcomes is tangible! The use of solutions to monitor chronic diseases has definitively led to improved patient outcomes and reduced hospital admissions. In addition, most of these solutions have promoted a healthier lifestyle and increased health literacy, enabling patients to better understand their condition and be more engaged.

As we discuss the impact of digital health solutions, what considerations should we keep in mind to effectively evaluate their contribution to VBHC objectives, particularly those that go beyond traditional healthcare metrics?

Well, when examining the impact of digital health solutions in achieving value-based care goals, it is crucial to adopt a comprehensive approach. First, it is important to establish clear objectives. What are our goals in terms of patient outcomes, experience, and overall population health? In addition to traditional metrics, we must prioritize patient-centered outcomes.

Factors such as patient satisfaction, engagement, and improvements in the quality of life should be considered. The focus is on how the digital solution can enhance the overall patient experience. Clinical outcomes are also a critical metric. We must determine whether the solution helps improve patient health in measurable ways, such as reducing hospital readmissions, better disease management, and adherence to treatment plans.

All these factors have to be considered in evaluating the success of digital solutions in achieving value-based healthcare objectives.



Despite the potential benefits, integrating digital health technologies within the VBHC framework presents challenges. What do you believe are the main challenges, and how can we address them to maximize the benefits of digital transformation?

A crucial challenge lies in the difficulties experienced by healthcare professionals concerning the use of information systems in general. Often, professionals feel that utilizing these tools consumes time without offering a significant return in patient care. Addressing this issue requires a user-centric approach, ensuring that digital solutions seamlessly integrate into existing workflows, providing efficiency without overwhelming professionals.

Another significant challenge is low digital literacy, both among healthcare professionals and patients. Limited familiarity with digital technologies can impact the adoption and effectiveness of digital health solutions. Educational strategies and ongoing training programs are essential to increase digital literacy and ensure that all users can make the most of these tools.

Effective integration into clinical team workflows is also a critical issue. If digital solutions do not align perfectly with existing practices, resistance to adoption is inevitable. Therefore, it is imperative to involve clinical

teams from the outset of digital solution development, ensuring that these tools complement rather than complicate daily healthcare activities.

Additionally, it is vital to address concerns about data security and privacy. This will help build the trust of healthcare professionals and patients in digital solutions.

Finally, the collaboration between all stakeholders from the early beginning of the solutions' conception will ensure that solutions are developed, aligned with clinical practices that can maximize the benefits of digital transformation within the context of Value-Based healthcare.

Looking ahead, which emerging digital health technologies or trends do you believe will play a critical role in advancing VBHC, and how should stakeholders prepare to integrate these innovations?

In terms of VBHC, there are a number of digital health technologies and emerging trends that offer great potential in the near future. One noticeable trend is the increased acceptance of telehealth and virtual care solutions that improve access to care and allow preventive measures.

Artificial intelligence, as well as machine learning, may be crucial too. This technology will allow the analysis of huge data sets to find patterns, predict patients' outcomes, and help develop personalized treatment plans.

Wearables or IoT devices and digital solutions are also emerging consistently. Such devices enable continuous monitoring of the health indicators of patients hence leading to an all-inclusive understanding of individual health statuses. With this real-time information, patients together with their doctor will be able to make informed

choices that reflect the aspects of prevention and personalization under VBHC.

The integration of all these technologies must take into consideration some key strategies, such as investing in a strong data infrastructure- A solid foundation of secure and interoperable data is the basis upon which AI, wearables, and other technologies can be effectively implemented – or implementing education and training programs to ensure healthcare professionals have the requisite skills to make use of such technologies.

Considering the specific context of Portugal, how do you assess the implementation and development of VBHC in the Portuguese health system? What are the main challenges and how can we overcome them to foster a greater adoption of VBHC?

I would say that the current landscape actually presents a mixed scenario for the implementation of Value-Based Healthcare in Portugal. While challenges persist, there are notable developments and initiatives that show positive alignment with VBHC principles.



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Challenges include the cultural shift from volume-based to a value-based healthcare model. Convincing stakeholders, including healthcare providers, payers, and patients of the benefits of VBHC remains a challenge. Also, a robust data infrastructure is fundamental for VBHC's success, and we know that healthcare systems continue to be highly fragmented and with limited interoperability.

On the other hand, various initiatives and projects, fully aligned with VBHC, are on course to date and will definitively have an impact on the healthcare sector in Portugal.

First, the recent decision of the National Health Service (SNS) to integrate primary care with hospitals into Local Healthcare Units as well as the adoption of the capitation financing model constitutes a strong step towards VBHC. Financial incentives based on clinical and patient-reported outcomes for cataract surgery have been included for the first time in the Public Hospital financing terms.

Second, the national project called VALUE4HEALTH involving 5 big hospitals in Portugal and financed by the Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR) is being developed and involves the collaboration of clinical teams, healthcare consultants, and technological experts. The objective is to develop a platform that will automatically collect, by clinical condition, clinical outcomes, patient-reported outcomes, and costs along the patient pathway. In a second phase, these hospital solutions will send data to a national benchmarking platform, enabling users to compare themselves but, more important, to learn about practices that generate the most value for the patient. Bariatric surgery and Cataract surgery are the two initial clinical conditions addressed in this project.



And finally, private and public stakeholders are more than ever aware of the necessity to address together this transformation to value, consistently and comprehensively, through the implementation of a national strategy. A governance of value in healthcare is taking shape, promising an acceleration of actions to ensure the value transformation in Portugal!

Prepared by

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