

In this essay I will be tackling one of the biggest problems that the NHS is facing which is patients in hospitals experiencing long waiting times. I'll talk about the reasons for this cause and what measures can be taken to reduce waiting times.

In recent years, the NHS hasn't been meeting waiting time targets. This is due to many reasons such as the high numbers of people admitted in A&E, particularly amongst the elderly population. Furthermore, the most common type of attention people receive is guidance/advice, recording vital signs, sampling blood and preparing prescriptions. It is important to recognise that guidance/advice is the type of attention received in 38% of visits to hospitals. These findings show that solutions are needed to free up nurses and doctors to focus on more urgent care needs and therefore increase discharge rates.

One proposal is to focus on a solution to help deal with the increase in admissions of elderly patients. The ageing population means that there are increasing numbers of elderly people needing medical treatment for longer periods, creating a strain on resources and causing waiting times to increase. A solution would be to provide homes fitted with technologies that can help reduce injury, such as stair lifts, and medical technologies that can be used to monitor health, such as smart toilets to analyse urine. This would allow any abnormalities to be detected earlier on, enabling quicker and more cost-effective treatment. Furthermore, if these types of accommodation are situated close together, they could be accompanied by a specialised health centre dedicated to the elderly, which would lessen the burden being placed on hospitals and help decrease waiting times.

Another proposal that could reduce waiting times and revolutionise the way that we treat patients is by incorporating Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics into hospital departments. Incorporating AI into the whole system would allow the analysis of medical records of patients so that trends can be monitored and doctors alerted at the early stages of diseases when they are easier to treat. In the long term, time would be saved as fewer appointments would be needed overall and the cost and time involved in treatment would be less, helping to reduce waiting times.

AI can also be incorporated into specially built robots that are mainly designed to record vital signs, sample blood, print prescriptions and give basic medical advice. Since robots would have an ability to sample and analyse blood, they could also help to reduce the prescription of antibiotics when it is not needed, therefore reducing antibiotic resistance. In addition, another benefit of using robots is that they can display different languages, helping people complete treatment faster without the need for a translator. In addition to hospitals, robots could also be placed in GPs, which could reduce the numbers of people going to hospital, reducing waiting times.

Furthermore, including AI could help the way health care professionals work together by automatically communicating important information between them. This could help reduce bureaucracy, meaning that patients will be discharged faster and doctors will spend more time on patients than on paperwork. In addition, with AI, it would be easier to create personalised treatment plans. For example, AI could determine the best prescription for a person based on the chemical composition of different medicines combined with an individual's medical characteristics, which could speed up treatment and avoid patients experiencing any allergic reactions or serious side effects.

The main reason for the proposals outlined in this essay are that many people currently go to hospital for relatively basic treatment or medical advice, and the proposed solutions would help address this.