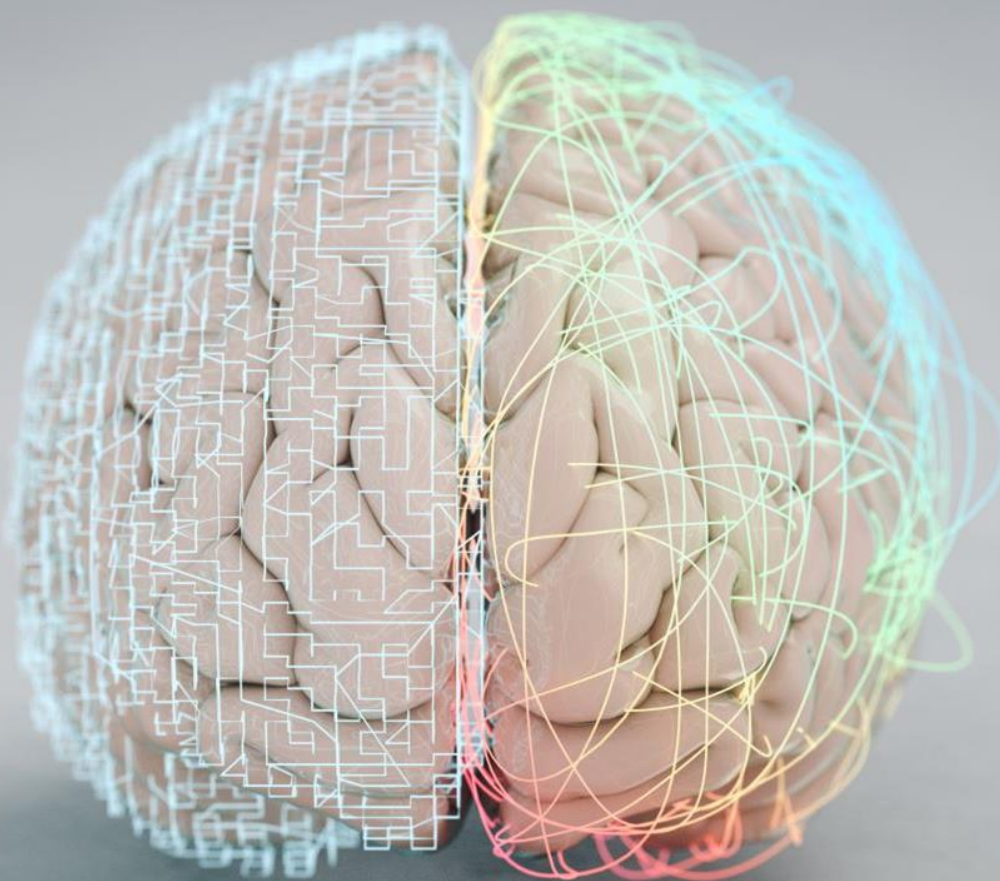




Creating an AI-Enabled, Academic Learning Health System: *Now it's Personal*

Peter J. Embí, MD, MS, FACP, FACMI, FIAHSI

Professor of Biomedical Informatics & Medicine
Endowed Directorship in Biomedical Informatics
Co-Director, ADVANCE AI Center
Co-Director, RAPID Learning Health System Center
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Texas AI Symposium - 2025
Houston, TX
May 15, 2025

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

AI Discovery & Vigilance to Accelerate
Innovation & Clinical Excellence

 **ADVANCE**

Let's start with a case...

Dec 11, 2017:
5:30am...



October, 2017: To the ER...

- Acute Paroxysms
 - Severe Headache
 - Profuse Sweating
 - Palor
 - Palpitations
 - Panic/Anxiety
 - Flank Pain
 - Nausea
 - Tachycaria
 - Severe Hypertensive
- Years of symptoms
- Discharged as atypical migraine...



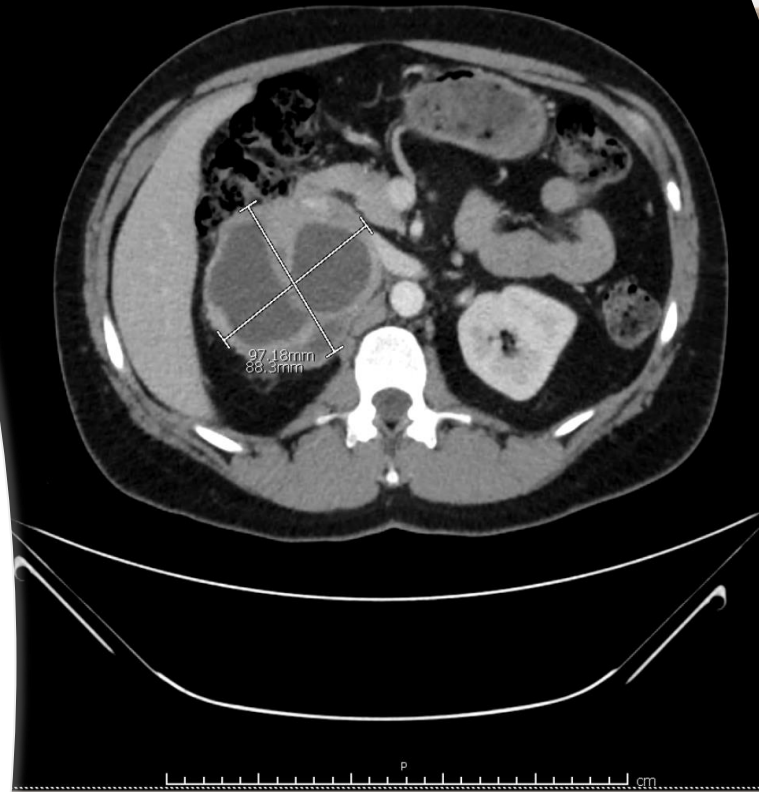
Spells continue... what is this?!

- Back home to Indy
- 4 more "spells"
- Neurologist – "occipital neuralgia"
- Back to work -> another spell
- In my office, realized what this must be...
- Called MD to get tested...



Diagnosis: Results while at AMIA 2017

- Metanephrines >30x normal!
 - Diagnosis confirmed:
 - Pheochromocytoma
- Next steps...
 - Needed CT abdomen
 - Had to push
 - Needed treatment
 - Rushed Endo visit
 - Started Rx
 - Needed experienced surgeon
 - Had to search
 - Ramping up Rx
 - I accelerated by 1-2 months

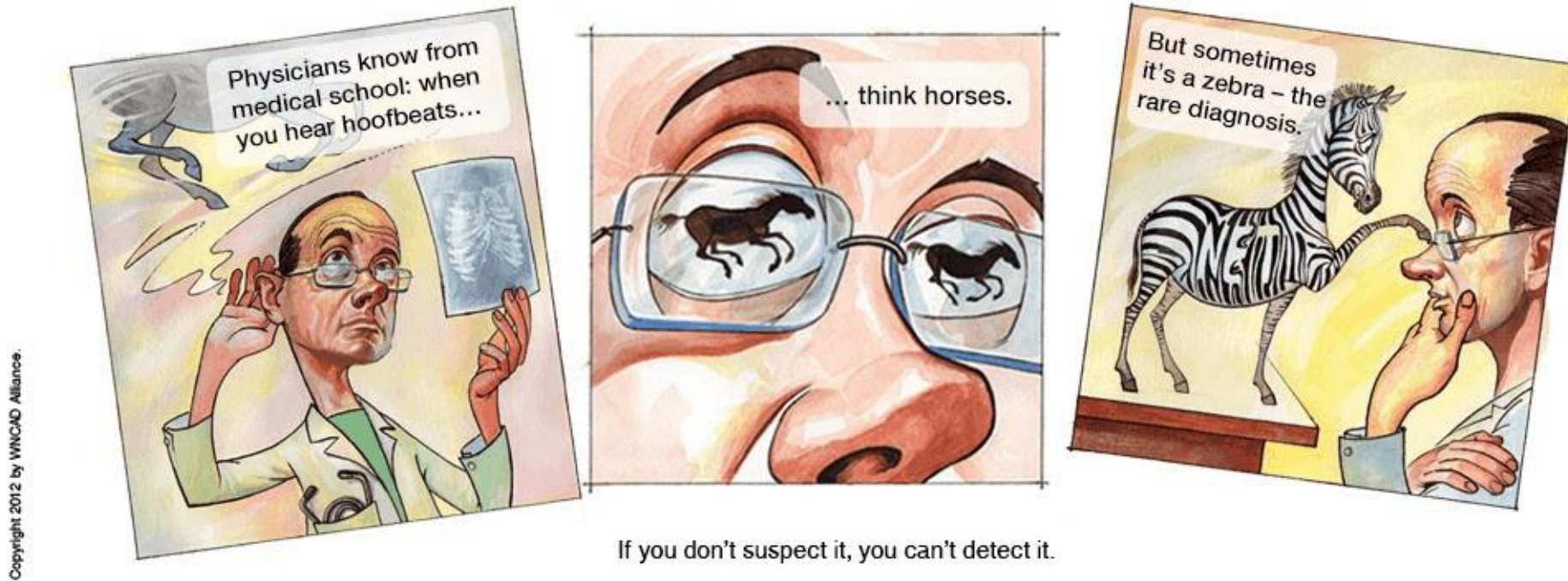


Recovery and Lessons/Realizations

- Upon awakening:
 - Grateful! Lucky!
 - Realization:
 - I could have died
 - Others have
 - I didn't because of who I am
 - Not right! Not necessary!
- Many ways that my diagnosis, care, & future care of others like me could have been improved through informatics
- **We must learn and do better!**



Lesson #1: Diagnostic Error Abounds! We can must do better!



Alternative:

“When you hear hoofbeats, expect horses, but consider zebras”

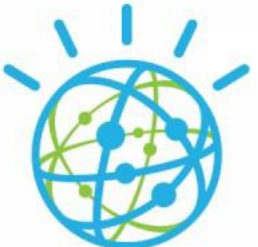
Diagnostic DSS – still limited at point-of-care



Dxplain[®]

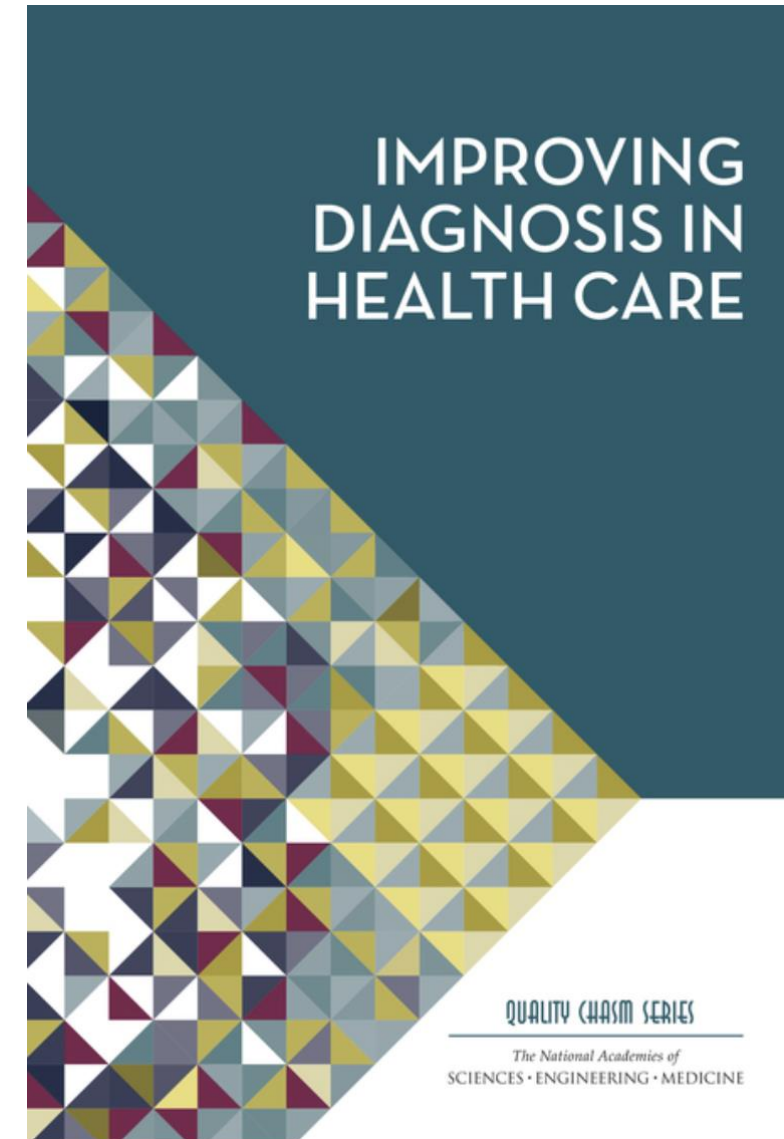
Internist-1 / QMR

MYCIN



IBM Watson

The central text lists several diagnostic decision support systems: Dxplain, Internist-1 / QMR, MYCIN, and IBM Watson. The IBM Watson logo is a stylized globe with blue and green lines and dots.





hypertension tachycardia headache



All

Images

News

Videos

Shopping

More

Settings

Tools

About 3,410,000 results (0.43 seconds)

Pheochromocytoma: high blood pressure, headaches, and anxiety ...

<https://www.endocrineweb.com/conditions/.../pheochromocytoma-tumor-central-adre...> ▼

May 27, 2014 - The classic symptoms of pheochromocytomas (or pheos) are those attributable to excess adrenaline production. Often these patients will have recurring episodes of sweating, **headache**, and a feeling of high anxiety. ... Excess sweating (generalized) Racing heart (**tachycardia** and palpitations)

People also ask

Can you have tachycardia and hypertension? ▼

What is the most common symptom of pheochromocytoma? ▼

Can high blood pressure cause headaches and eye pain? ▼

Can you feel high blood pressure in your head? ▼

Feedback

Severe Paroxysmal Hypertension (Pseudopheochromocytoma ...

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/484999> ▼

by SJ Mann - 1999 - Cited by 106 - Related articles

Severe, symptomatic paroxysmal **hypertension** always generates suspicion of a ... such as **headache**, chest pain, dizziness, nausea, palpitations, flushing, and ... pressure, unilateral flushing, dizziness, weakness, **tachycardia**, and polyuria.

Lesson #2: We don't have a LHS today

Lesson/Realization #2a:

Actually, we do have one common way of learning, as a system...

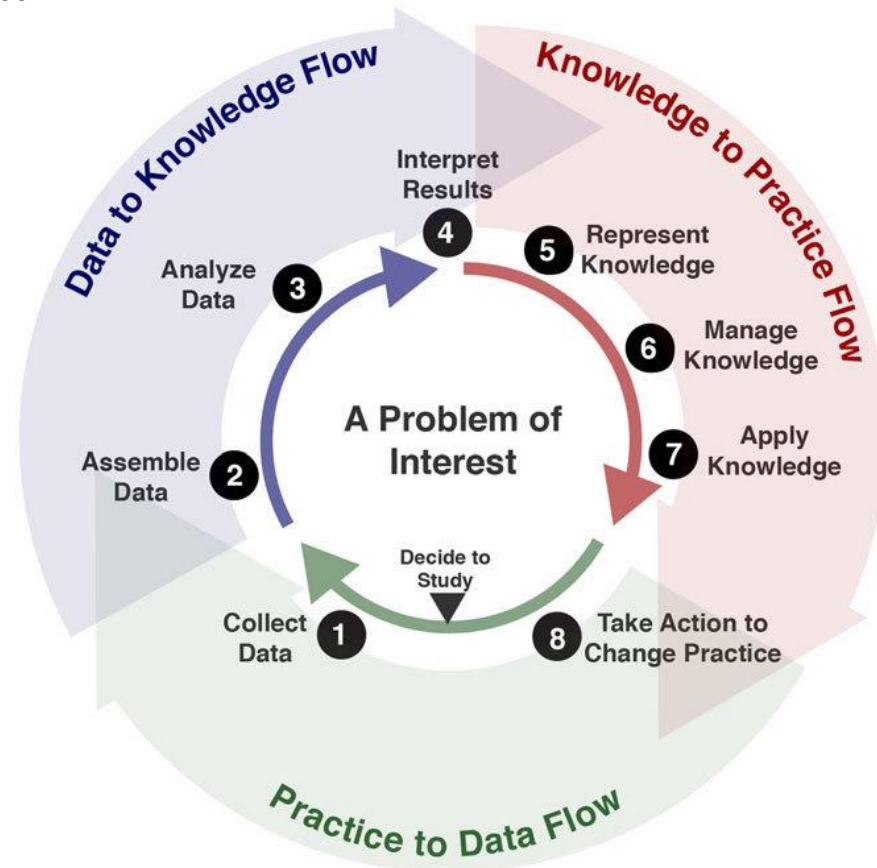


The Learning Health System (LHS) - Definitions

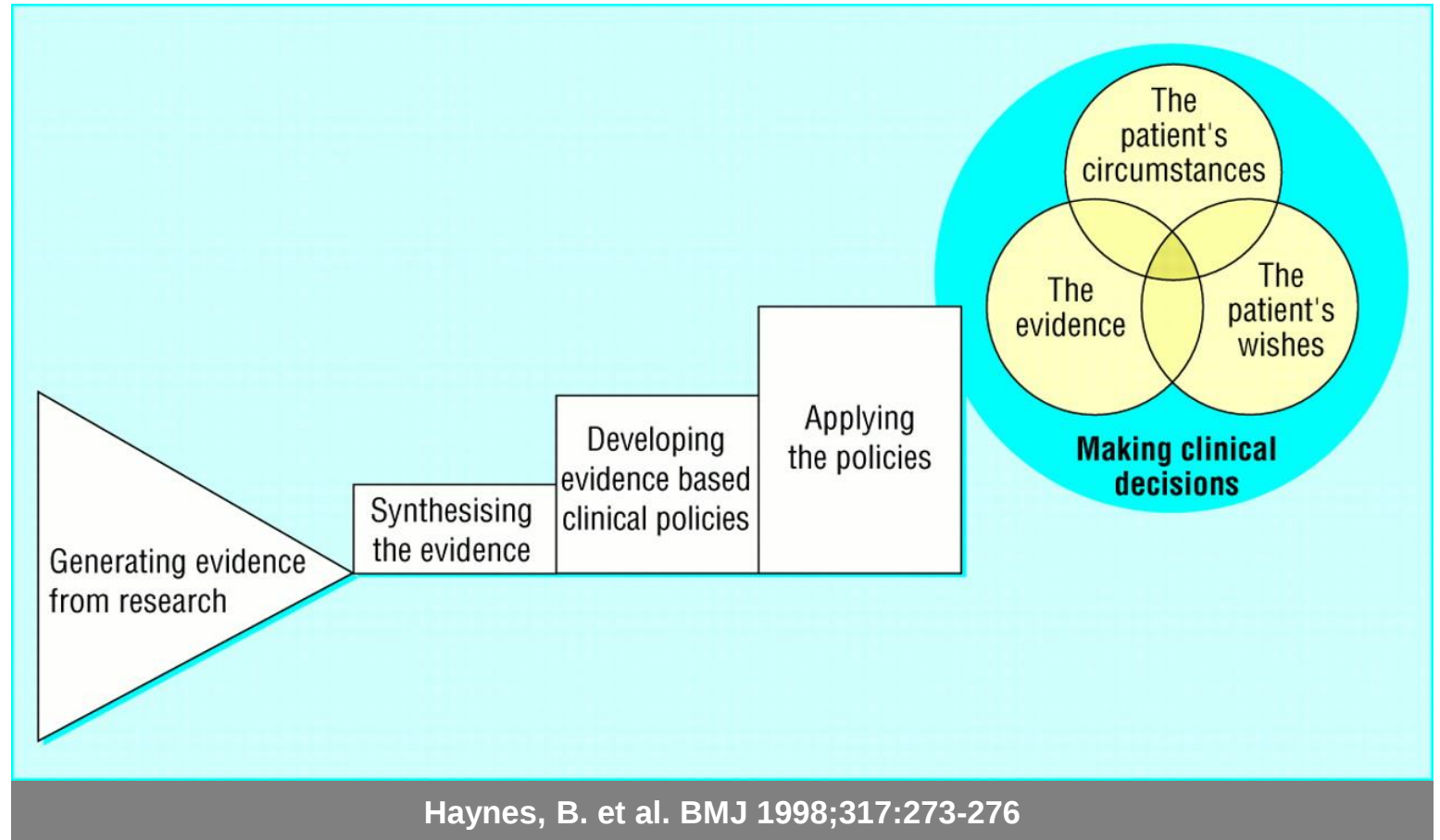


“Learning health systems (LHS) are healthcare systems in which knowledge generation processes are embedded in daily practice to produce continual improvement in care.”

Source: Olsen L, Aisner D, McGinnis JM. The learning healthcare system: workshop summary. Natl Academy Pr; 2007

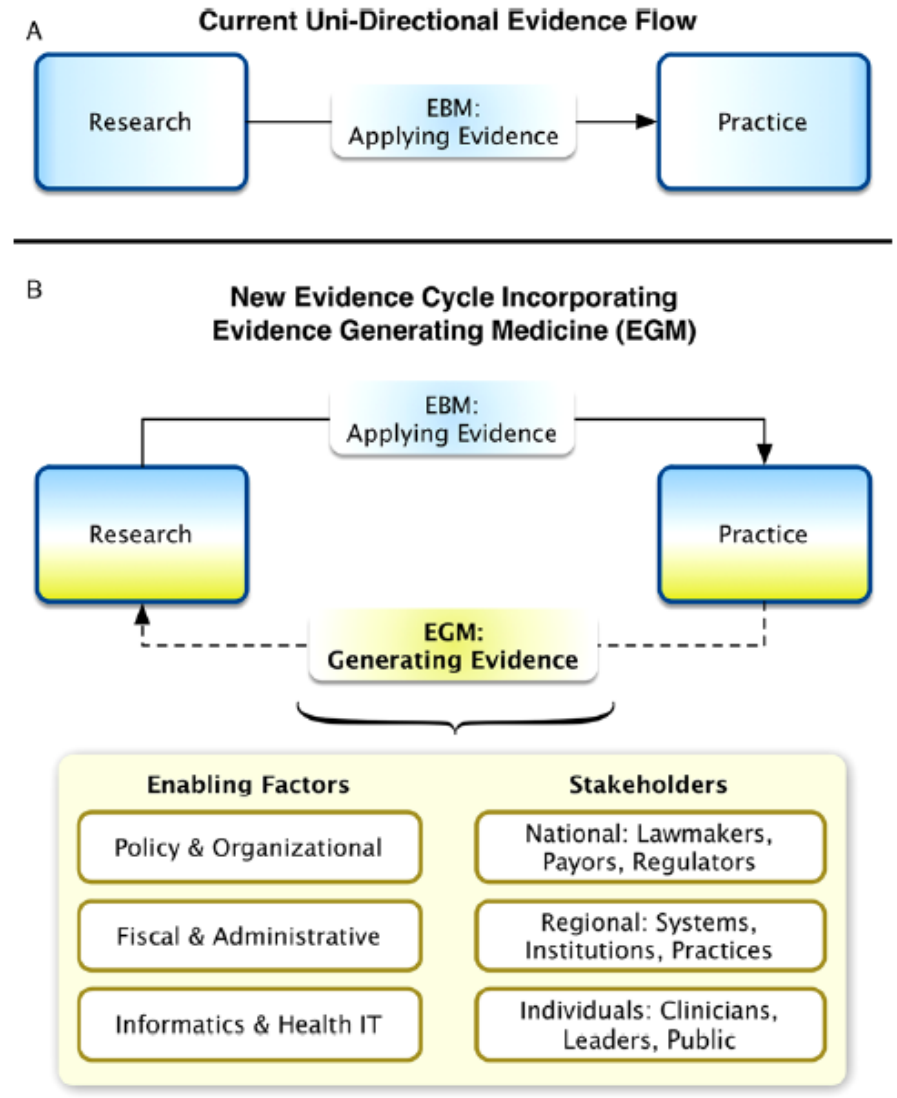


Traditional path
from
generation of
evidence to its
application



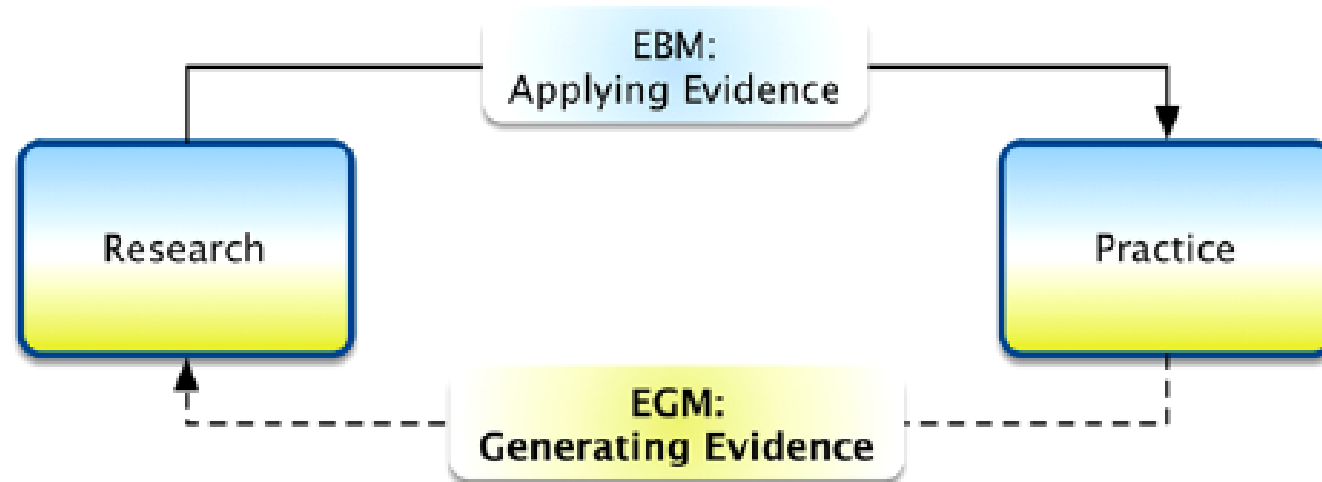
Research-Practice Paradigm – EBM+EGM

- Clinical care activities not entirely distinct from research activities
- Must consider EGM when we practice to advance science and care
- Many EGM activities ongoing & need support to achieve goals
- Advancing EGM is critical to completing the EBM lifecycle
- Multiples enabling factors & stakeholders



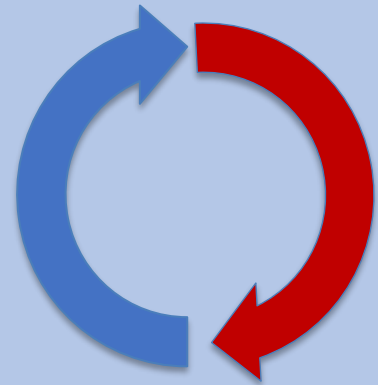
We want a learning cycle, but...

- Even a simple form of learning – “What did I miss?”
- Absence* of feedback loops for clinicians, the system
- Even when “system” has/can share new evidence
- We haven’t decided to use system for “learning”



Local Learning Systems...

Goals



“Learn from every patient”

Overcome fragmentation among current units/committees, “silos of excellence”

“Scale & Spread” - systematically monitor, study, scale

Improve care/satisfaction among stakeholders

Improve processes, efficiency, outcomes, costs (value)... In an equitable manner

Accelerate discoveries and translation of evidence

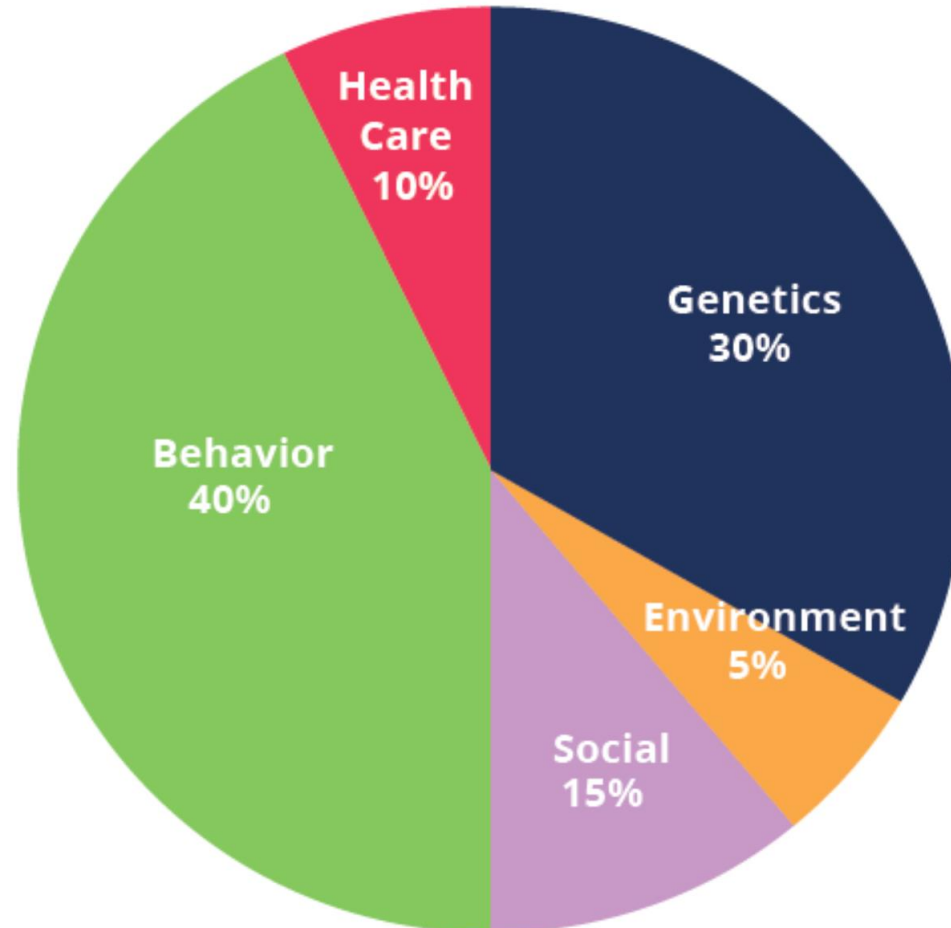
Disseminate discoveries, experiences and best practices

Leverage LHS approaches as key differentiator



Lesson #3: Data are Critical

- Data relevant to health largely exist beyond traditionally collected healthcare data



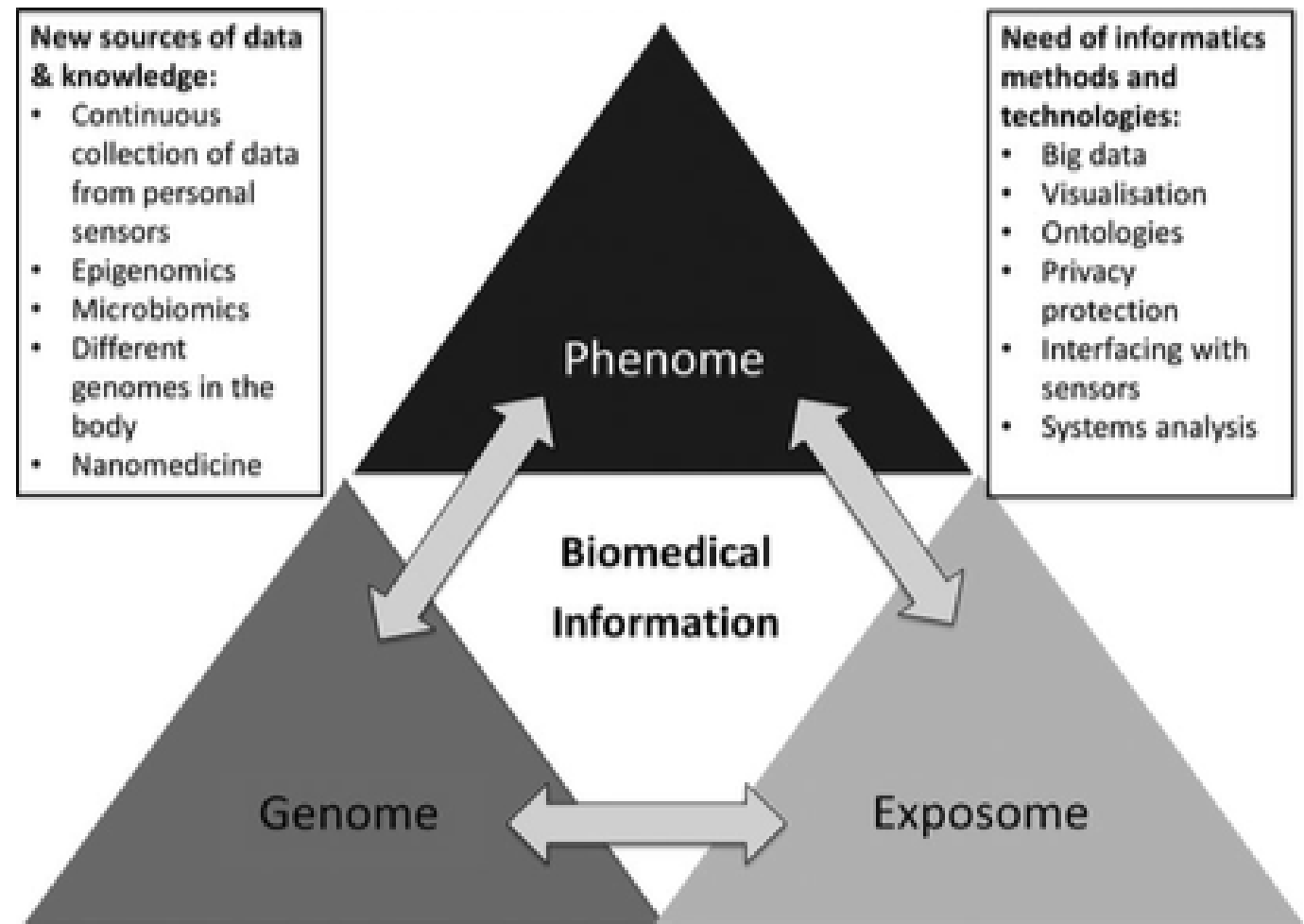
In my case: Tachycardia at rest each day



Informatics & 'omics integration

Informatics must provide coherent framework for dealing with multi-scale, population data, including:

- Phenome,
- Genome,
- Exposome
- their interconnections.



LHS Infrastructure: *Learning From Data*

Bridging Health IT and Informatics

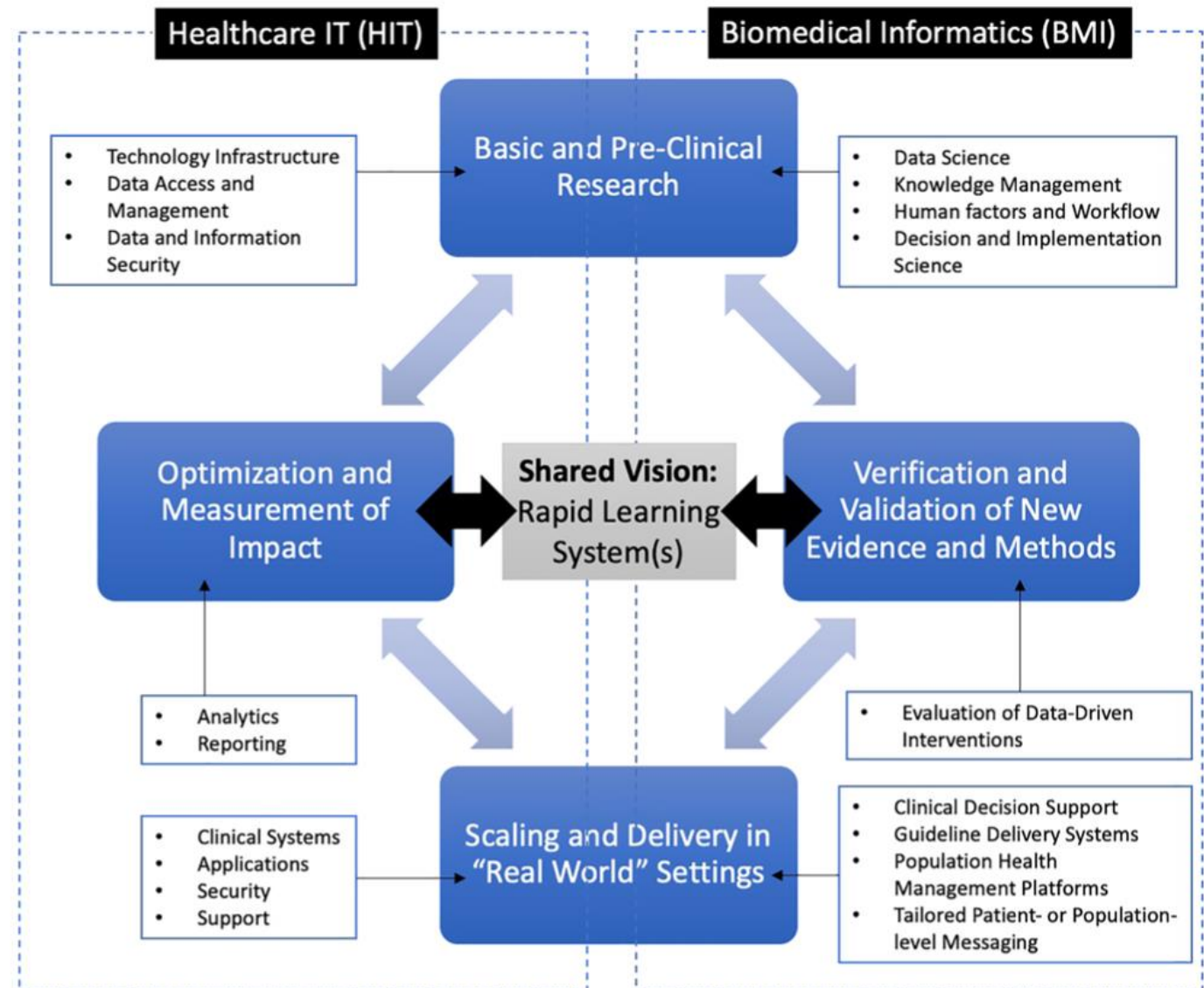
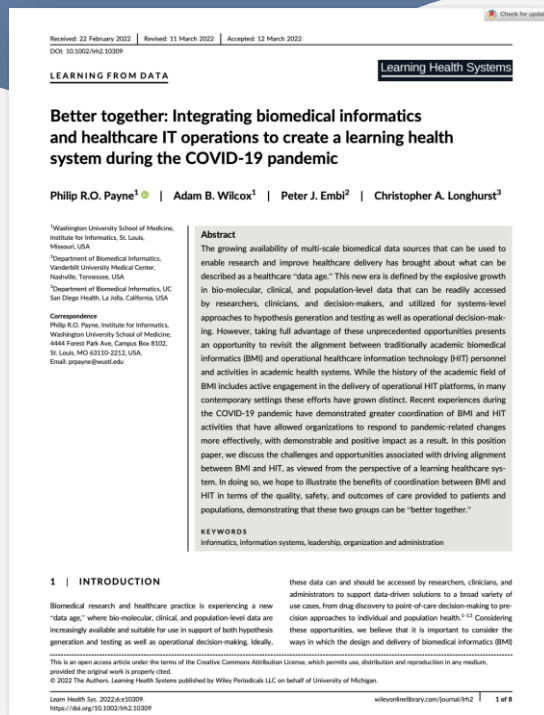
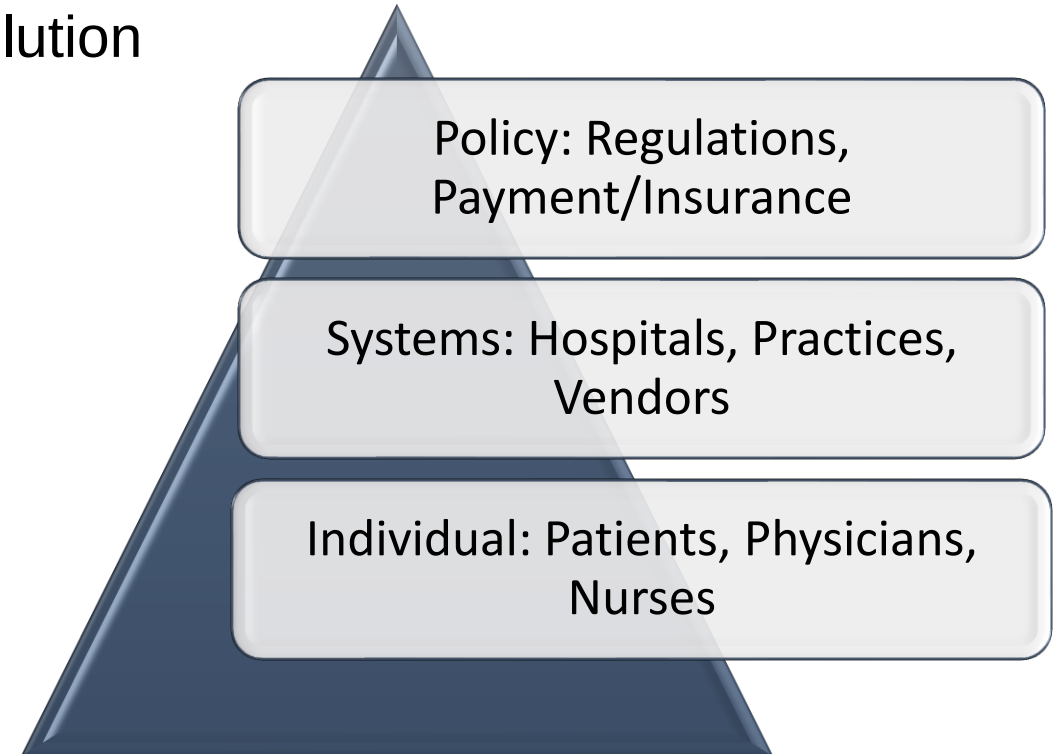


FIGURE 2 Conceptual model for a “rapid learning” healthcare system in which BMI and HIT work synergistically. In this example, four major stages for the design and implementation of a data-driven intervention strategy are shown, spanning the capabilities of BMI and HIT leaders and practitioners. For each stage, examples of the types of competencies and methods that contribute to each such phase are shown

Lesson #4: Creating AI-Enabled LHS is a Socio-Technical Challenge

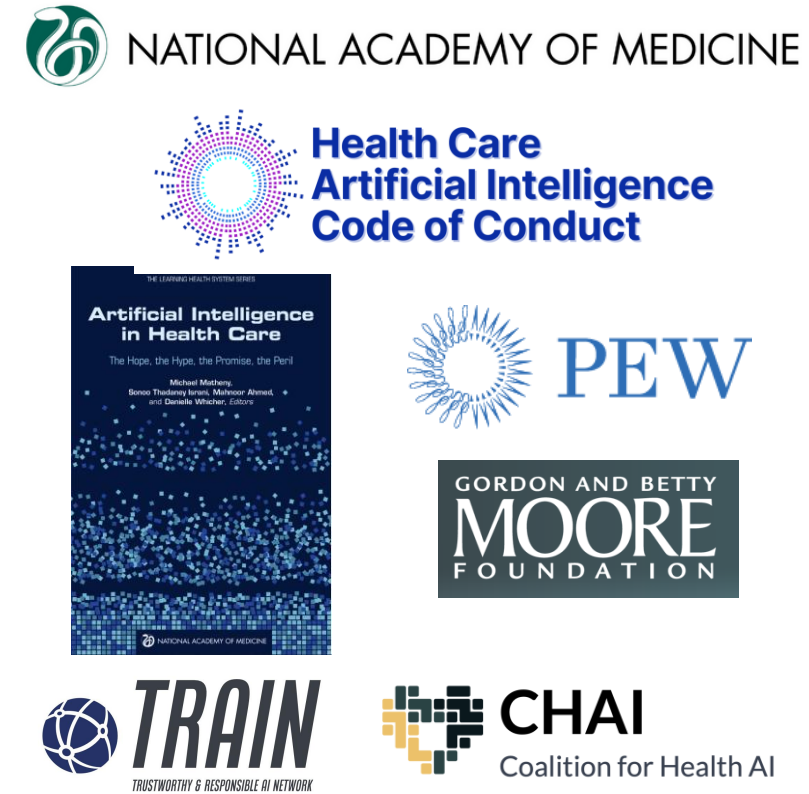
- Information Technologies only part of the solution
 - Fiscal/Administrative
 - Aligning incentives
 - Cultural/Behavioral
 - Individual/Societal concerns
- Must consider EGM issues at several levels
 - Policy level
 - Systems level
 - Individual level



- A growing area in need of focus: **Artificial Intelligence** in Health/care...



AI Poised to Transform Healthcare and Academic Medicine



Ongoing Activities in Health Artificial Intelligence

Implementation
of Innovations

**AI
Implementation**
at VUMC:
Informatics/
Health IT

Transformational AI Opportunity:
Competence, Capability, Ethics, Equity, Evaluation,
Interpretability, Impact

Foundational AI at VUMC: DBMI &
ADVANE AI Center; Biostatistics;
Computer Science

Health AI Research & Development

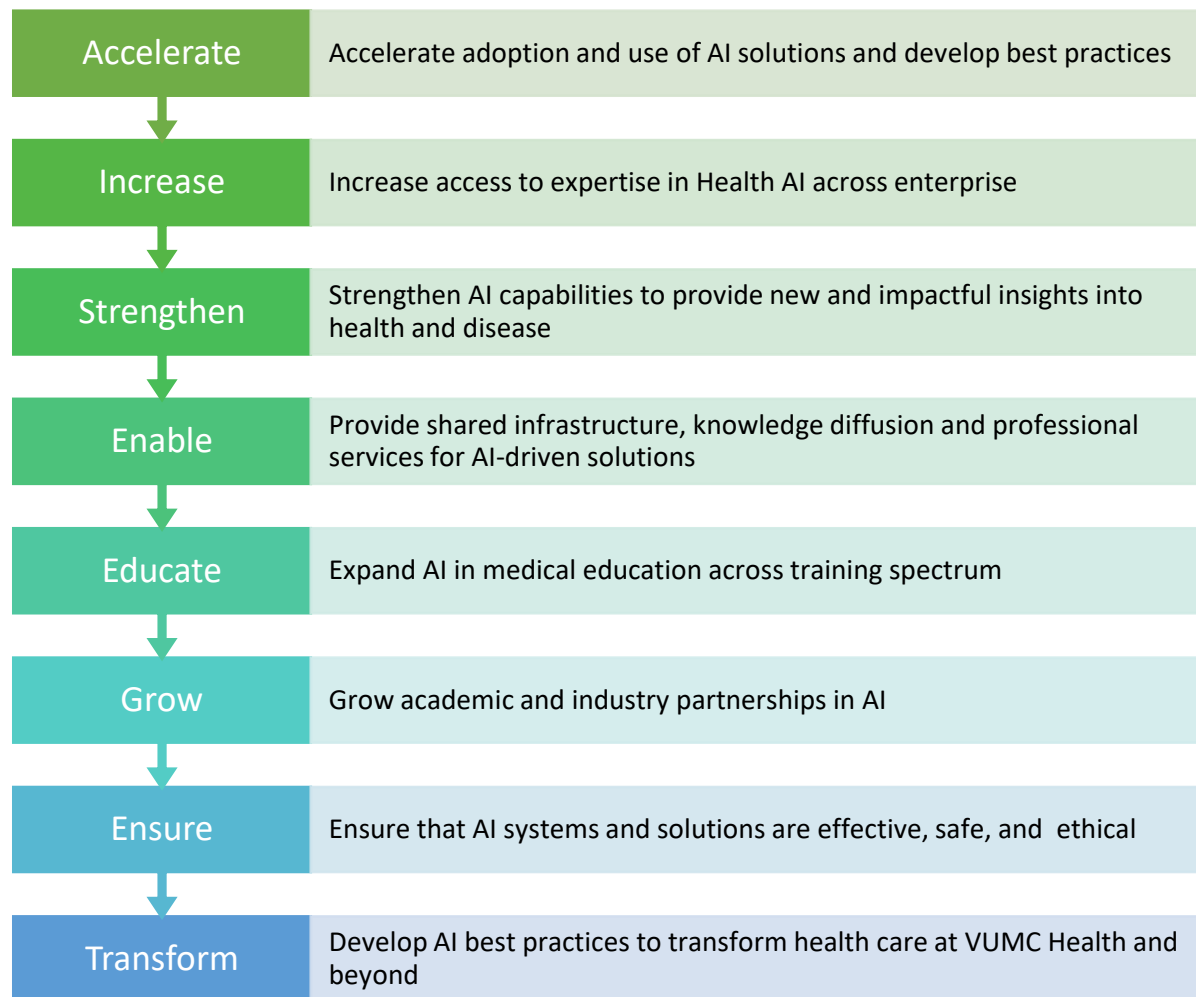


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Focus and Goals of ADVANCE Center





VUMC AI Governance:

Led by AI
Technology
(AIT)

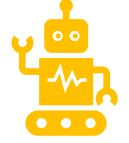
● Committee



Tracking and
responding to
changes in federal
and state AI
regulation



Writing policies and
refining approaches to
safe, effective,
compliant use, while
enabling
research/innovation



Managing
procurement of
"internally-" &
"externally
sourced" AI
solutions



Inventory of AI
solutions and
deployments



Development of AI
capabilities for ongoing
monitoring of
algorithms
(Algorithmvigilance)

AI-driven Healthcare

- Growth in AI-driven healthcare
- Ongoing development and application of such tools
- Significant potential for **improved care and efficiencies**
- Evidence of **unintended negative impacts**
- We need for a “learning system” to:
 - Monitor algorithm-driven healthcare for effects
 - Mechanisms respond/adjust to unintended effects, drift

RESEARCH ARTICLE

ECONOMICS

Dissecting racial bias in an algorithm used to manage the health of populations

Ziad Obermeyer^{1,2*}, Brian Powers³, Christine Vogeli⁴, Sendhil Mullainathan^{5*†}

The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

MEDICINE AND SOCIETY

Debra Malina, Ph.D., Editor

Hidden in Plain Sight — Reconsidering the Use of Race Correction in Clinical Algorithms

Darshali A. Vyas, M.D., Leo G. Eisenstein, M.D., and David S. Jones, M.D., Ph.D.

npj | Digital Medicine

www.nature.com/npjdigitalmed

REVIEW ARTICLE

OPEN

Check for updates

Sex and gender differences and biases in artificial intelligence for biomedicine and healthcare

Davide Cirillo^{1,10}, Silvina Catuara-Solarz^{2,3,10}, Czuue Morey^{3,4}, Emre Guney⁵, Laia Subirats^{6,7}, Simona Mellino³, Annalisa Gigante³, Alfonso Valencia^{1,8}, María José Rementería¹, Antonella Santucci Chadha² and Nikolaos Mavridis^{3,9}

Need to
monitor
healthcare
Algorithms



Biases in Data:
Known and Unknown



Caution about
generalizability



Unexpected results
can be expected



Must monitor to
promote trust



Need new systems
and approaches



Essential for safe,
efficient, effective and
equitable care

"Algorithmovigilance"



"The scientific methods and activities relating to the evaluation, monitoring, understanding, and prevention of adverse effects of algorithms in health care."



Akin to pharmacovigilance for monitoring drug effects



Increasingly important as AI/ML-derived algorithms are used



Invited Commentary | Health Informatics

Algorithmovigilance—Advancing Methods to Analyze and Monitor Artificial Intelligence–Driven Health Care for Effectiveness and Equity

Peter J. Embi, MD, MS

In recent years, there has been rapid growth and expansion in the use of machine learning and other artificial intelligence approaches applied to increasingly rich and accessible health data sets to develop algorithms that guide and support health care.¹ As they make their way into practice, such algorithms have the potential to fundamentally transform how health care decisions are made and, therefore, how patients are diagnosed and treated.² While such approaches hold great promise for enabling more precise, accurate, timely, and even fair decision-making when properly developed and applied, there is also growing evidence that systematic biases can lead to unintended and even severe consequences.^{3,4} Mirroring disparities and inequities inherent in our society and health system,⁵ such biases can be inherent in not only the underlying data used to develop algorithms but also how algorithmic interventions are deployed.

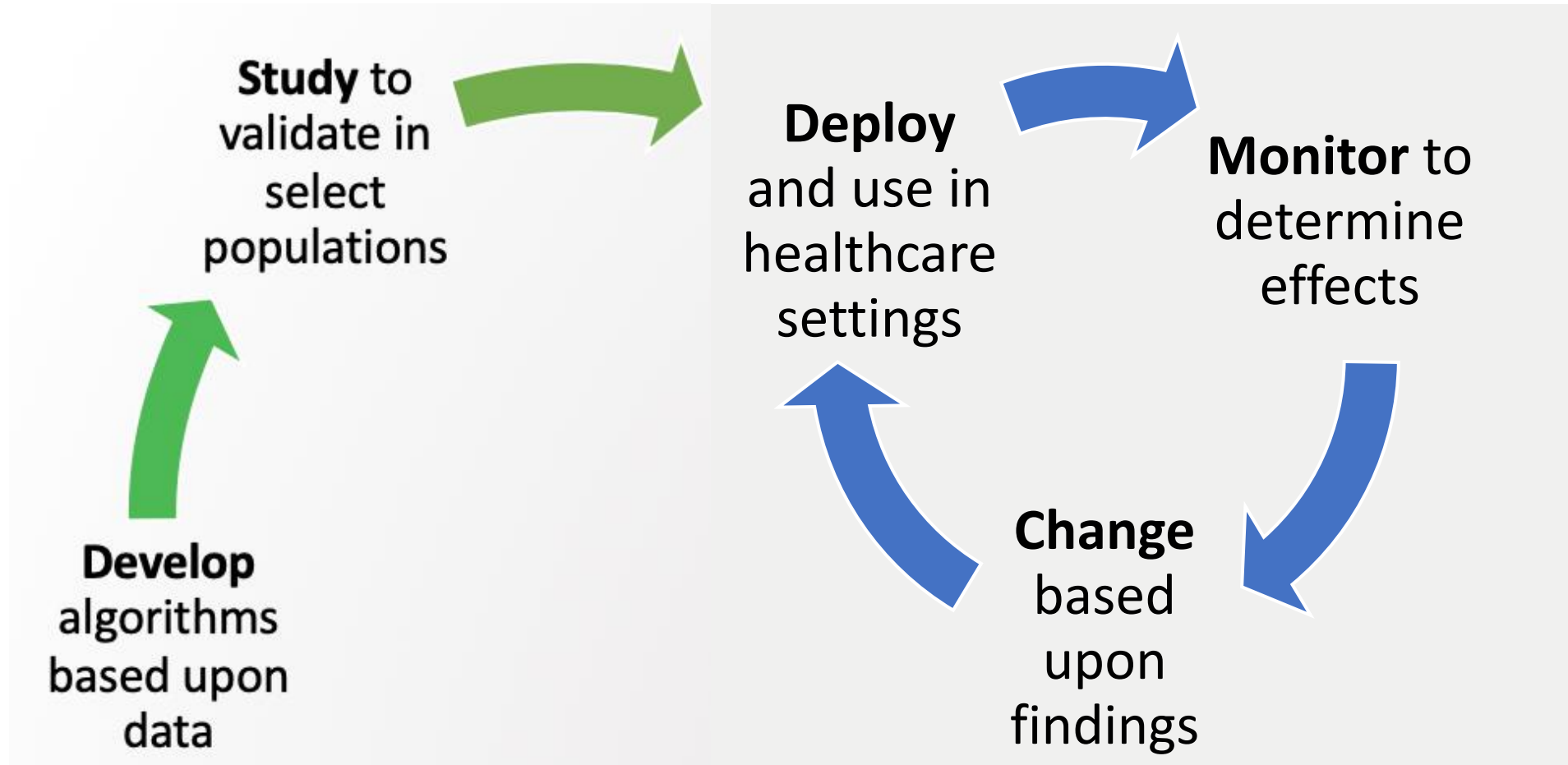
Elsewhere in *JAMA Network Open*, Park and colleagues⁶ present findings from a study evaluating different approaches to the debiasing of health care algorithms developed to predict postpartum depression (PPD) among a cohort of pregnant women with Medicaid coverage. The researchers, from IBM Research, leveraged the IBM MarketScan Medicaid Database, a deidentified, individual-level claim records data set with approximately 7 million Medicaid enrollees across multiple states, to derive their algorithms. They started by developing 2 sets of machine learning models trained to predict 2 outcomes: (1) diagnosis or treatment for PPD and (2) postpartum mental health service utilization. Their initial, risk-adjusted generalized linear models for each outcome demonstrated a notable difference in the cohort with binarized race, with White patients having twice the predicted likelihood of being diagnosed with PPD compared with Black patients and a significantly higher likelihood of utilizing mental health services. However, as the authors point out,

[+ Related article](#)

Author affiliations and article information are listed at the end of this article.

Embi PJ. JAMA Network Open. 2021;4(4):e214622.

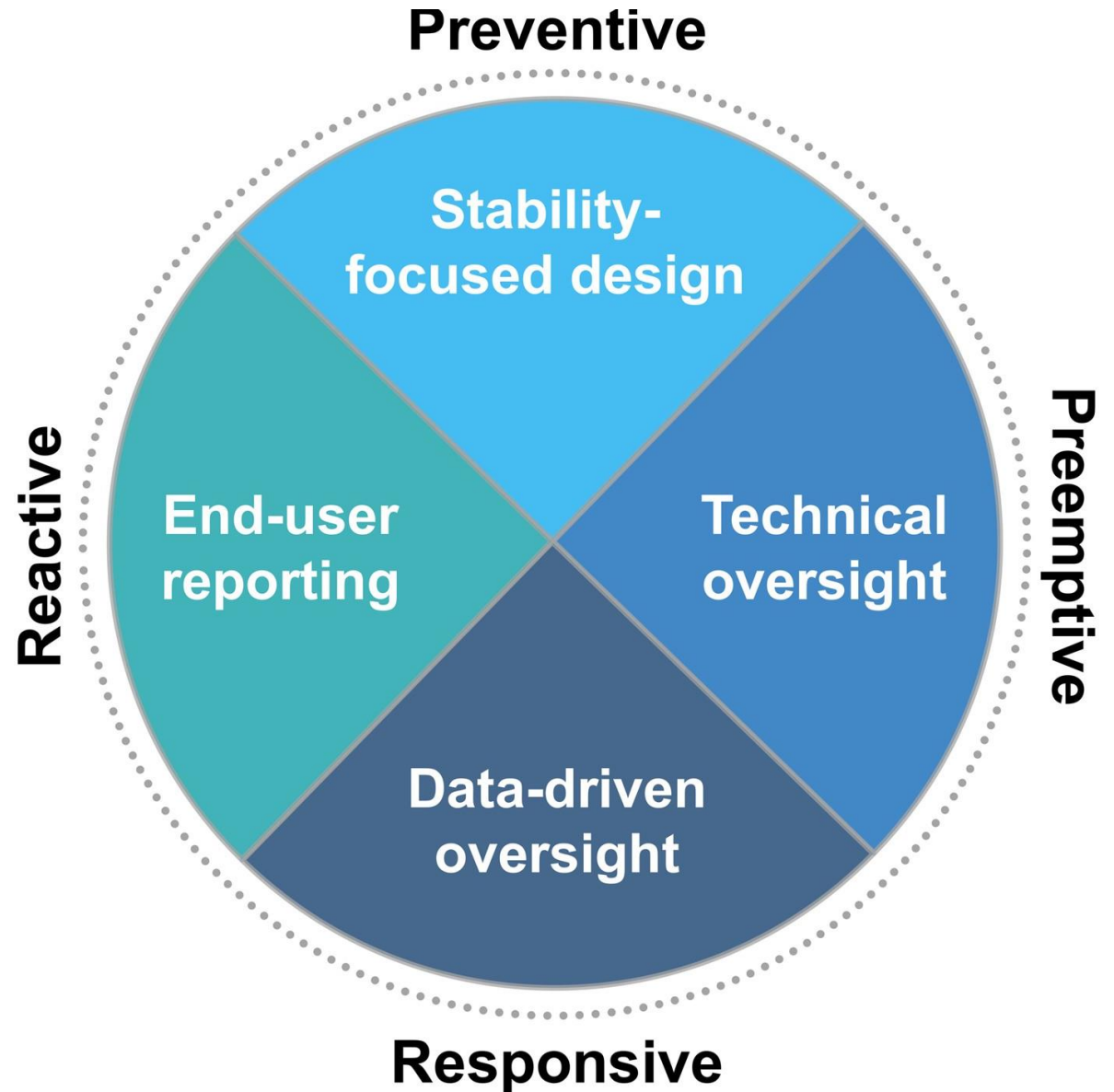
Algorithm vigilance via learning health system



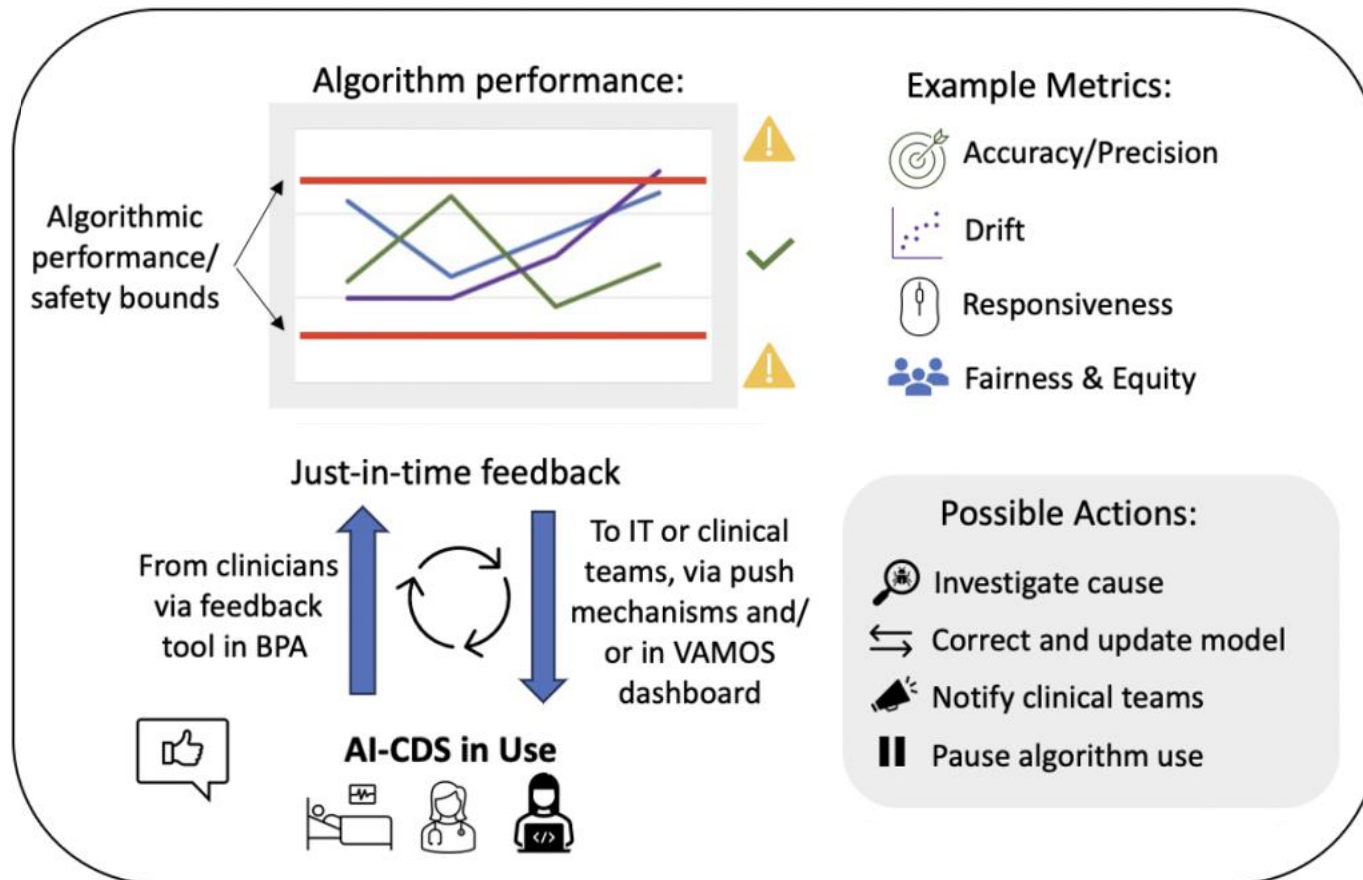
Continuum of
algorithmovigilance
approaches to ongoing
model monitoring and
maintenance

**Sustainable deployment
of clinical prediction
tools—a 360° approach
to model maintenance**

*Davis S, Embi PJ, Matheny M.
J Am Med Inform Assoc, May
2024*



The Vanderbilt Algorithmovigilance Monitoring and Operations System (VAMOS)



- Novel socio-technical system of processes and analytical dashboarding for (near) real-time Health AI monitoring:
 - Organizational governance and oversight
 - Capturing and Reporting Adverse events
 - Team-based monitoring
 - Responding to issues

VAMOS Human Centered Design: Emergent Design Considerations

Users	Support a broad range of users with differing goals and expertise
Use Cases	Support diverse algorithms and implementation use cases
Meta-Data	Enable access to model facts, criticality and organizational contacts
Analytics	Support analytic functions including performance metric monitoring and drift detection
Flexibility	Provide flexible & customizable temporal displays of algorithm performance and impact
Feedback	Receive and display feedback from algorithm end-users
Notes	Log notes and action items for each algorithm
Reporting	Provide reporting tools geared to multiple audiences
Communication	Support communication about algorithmic management between technical, operational, and clinical teams



VAMOS

(VIGILANT AI MONITORING AND OPERATIONS SYSTEM)

Initial Users:

- ✓ AIT – VUMC AI Governance Committee
- ✓ VUMC Health IT

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Innovation & Clinical Excellence

 **ADVANCE**

VAMOS DASHBOARD: MOCKUP

Show: All

Search:

Show Alerts

Generate Task List

Generate Reports

Model Name	State	Criticality	Class	Type	Notices	PERFORMANCE	PROCESS	OUTCOMES	FAIRNESS
Cornelius	Active	3	Clinical	BPA		✓	! Fire rate increase	✓	✓
Surgical scheduling	Inactive	1	Operations	Patient list		! Accuracy drift	✓	✓	✓
Post-partum hemorrhage	Maint.	1	Research	Storyboard		✓	✓	✓	! Urban/rural issue
AI-VTE	Active	2	Clinical	Order set		✓	✓	! VTE rate increase	✓
Others ...									

Show: All

☒ All/None

☒ Active State

☒ Maintenance State

☒ Inactive State

☒ Research Class

☒ Clinical Class

☒ Operational Class

☒ Others ...

Types of notices:

-  Review due soon
-  Feedback from end users
-  Input features
-  Upcoming planned downtimes
-  Upcoming changes/upgrades

Other anomalies ...

Multiple metrics continuously monitored for drift, anomalies, and differences in sub-populations

Alerts generated and sent to model contacts for any "red" status

VAMOS Application

Vanderbilt Algorithmovigilance Monitoring and Operations System



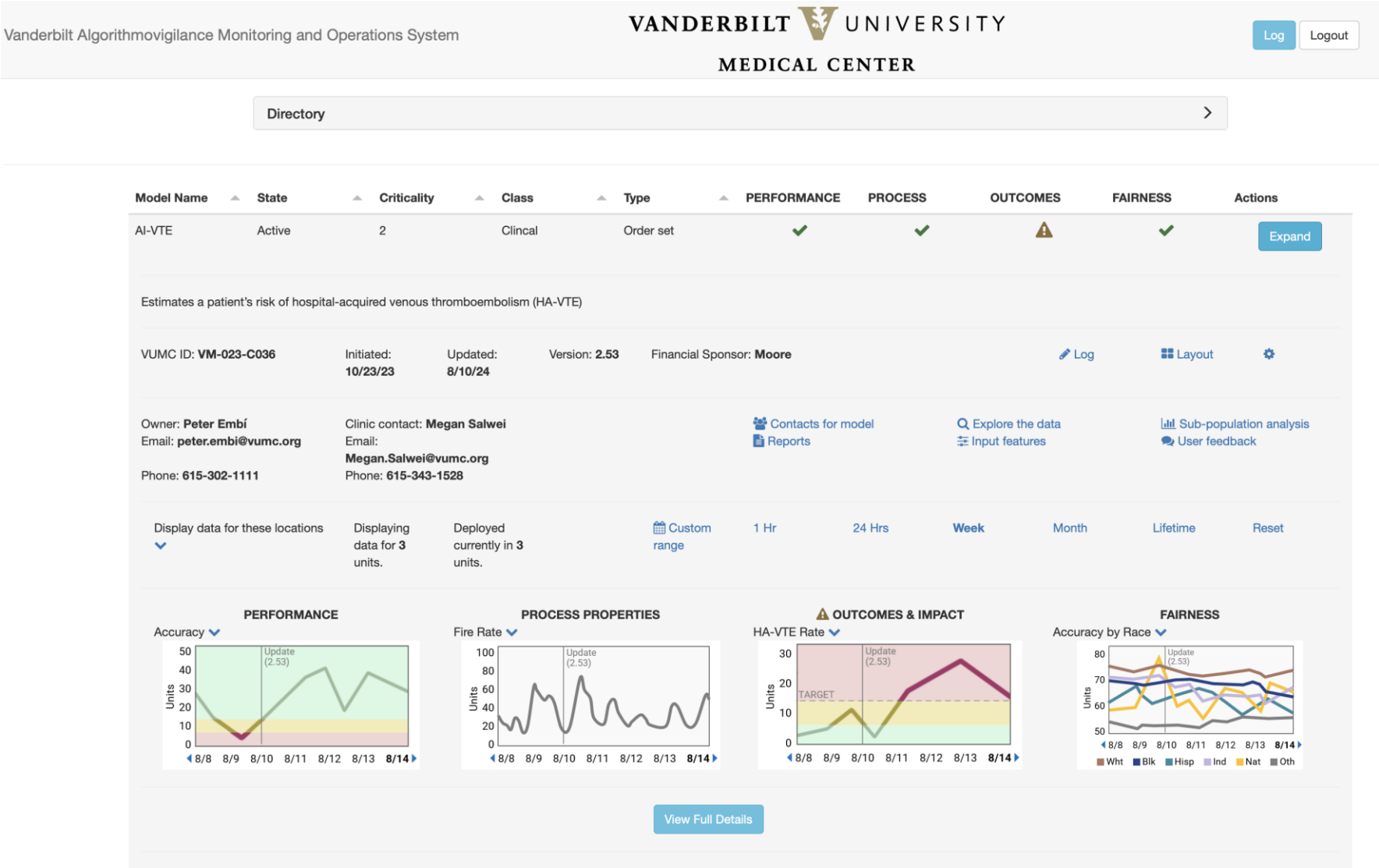
Log Logout

Directory >

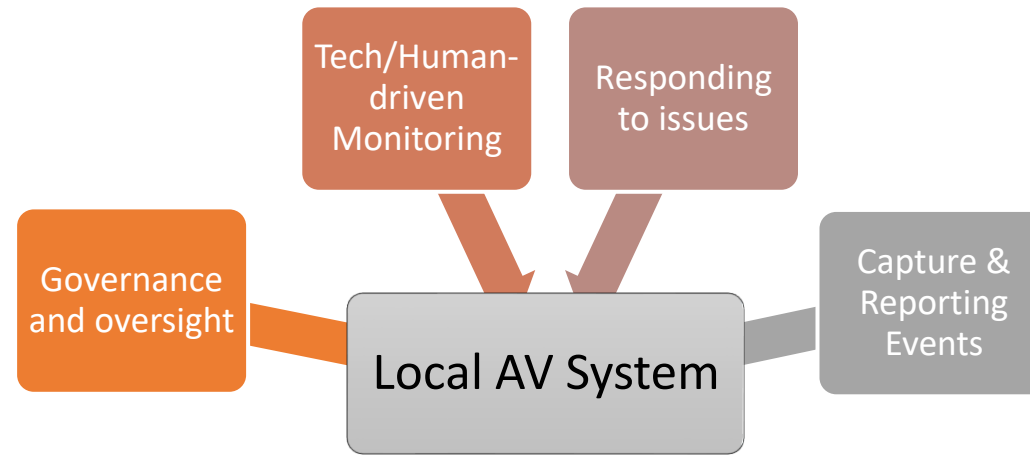
Model Name	State	Criticality	Class	Type	PERFORMANCE	PROCESS	OUTCOMES	FAIRNESS	Actions
AI-VTE	Active	2	Clinical	Order set	✓	✓	⚠	✓	Expand
Cornelius	Active	3	Clinical	BPA	✓	!	✓	✓	Expand
Surgical scheduling	Inactive	1	Operations	Patient list	⚠	✓	✓	✓	Expand
Post-partum hem...	Maint.	1	Research	Storyboard	✓	✓	✓	!	Expand

**Patent Pending*

VAMOS Application



Creating a Federated Algorithmovigilance (AV) Network



Next Steps / Opportunities



Expand to other users / use cases & Validate



Invitations for early adopter sites/
VAMOS Collaborative partners



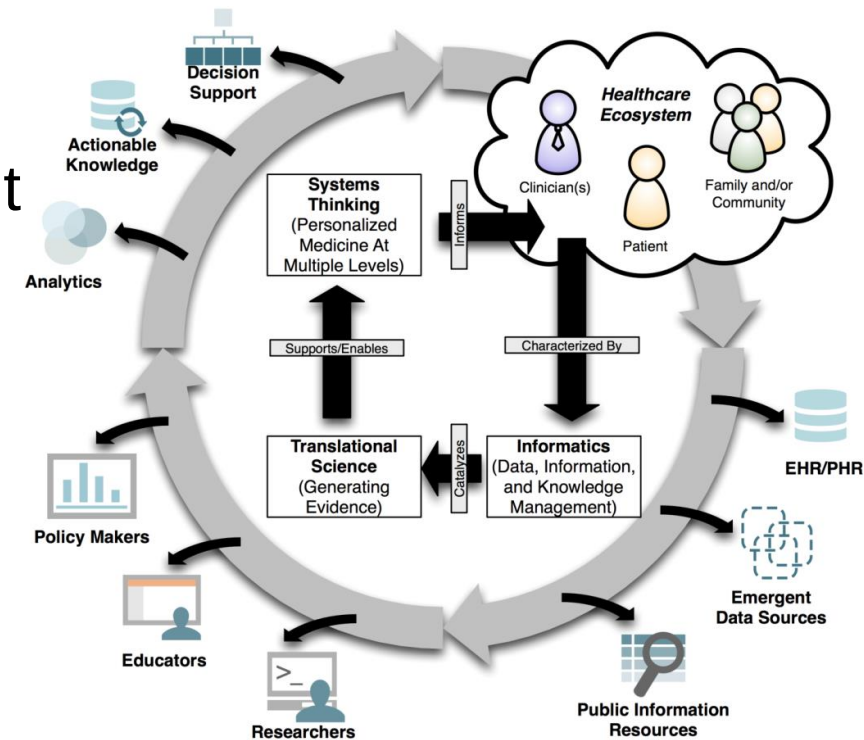
Standards development (technical, data, API, Measures, Responses, etc.)



Enhance Platform, Grow Open-Access efforts, Establish Network

Lesson #5: Informatics can must help

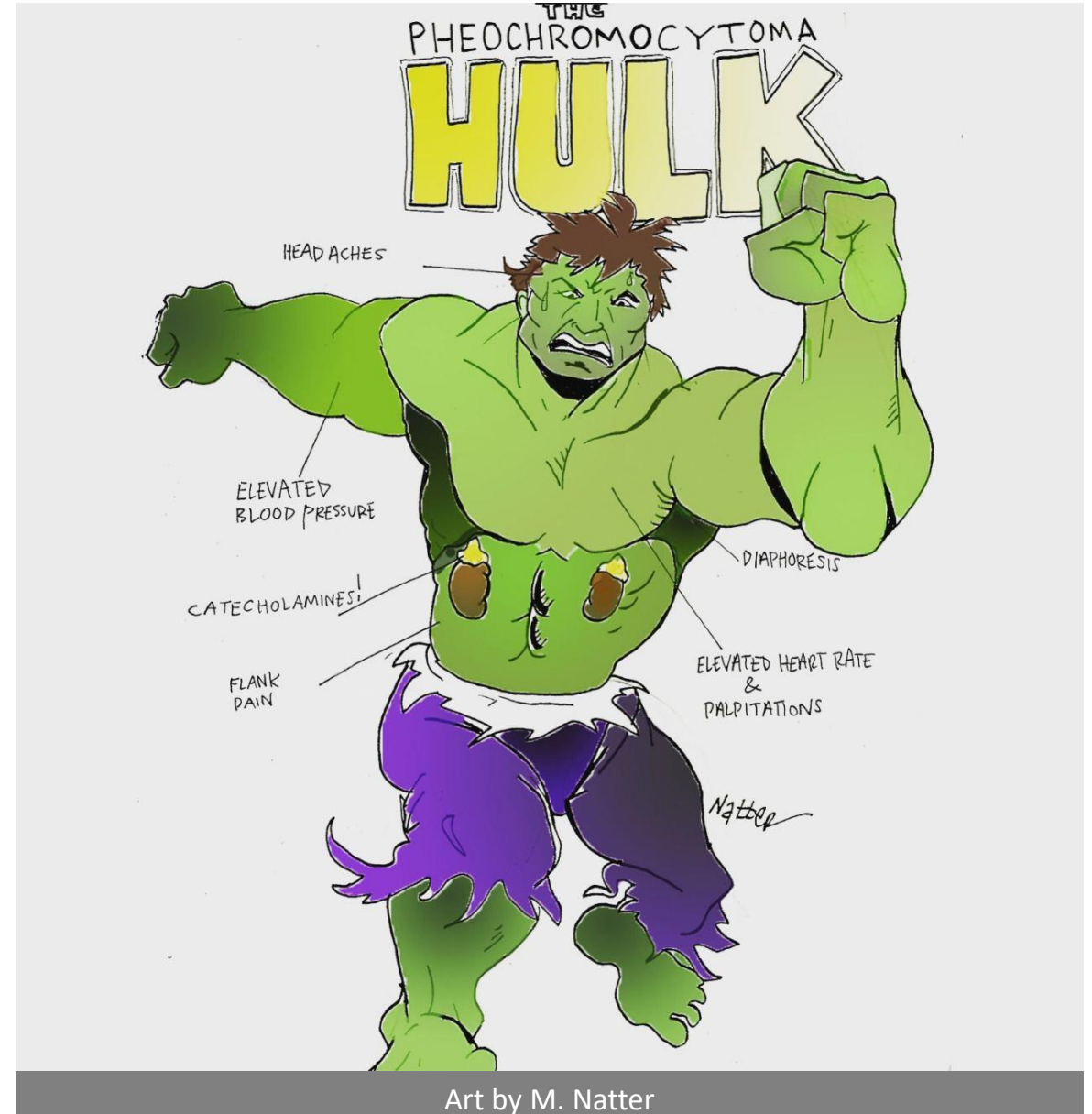
- Support Informatics-enabled LHS for discovery & care
- Effective AI to improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment
- AI to accelerate discovery and translation to practice
- Informatics & AI to overcome health disparities
- Empower people and systems to improve health/care
- Create a virtuous cycle of activities to advance healthcare, quality, research, and public health



Embi, Peter J., Payne, Philip R.O. "Evidence generating medicine: redefining the research-practice relationship to complete the evidence cycle." *Medical care* 51 (2013): S87-S91.

Lesson #5: We can must help

- Urgency!
 - People are suffering. Needlessly.
- Shouldn't have to be an MD, well-connected, to get great care
- The system isn't working for too many
- Where we know how to fix it, we must act!
- Where we don't (yet), we must continue to innovate!



Thank You!



Business Card



Questions or Comments?



peterembi



peter.embi@vumc.org