

Physical Exams Still A Crucial Part of Healthcare's Future

Technology is redefining healthcare as we know it. Whether it's [Google Glass](#), a simple tablet computer, or some other kind of emerging medical technology, technology has the ability to completely change the way healthcare is delivered, and it's up to us to adapt healthcare spaces and delivery systems to compensate for these pervasive changes. Even with these transformations, however, comes a requirement to maintain the necessary basics of healthcare interactions between doctor and patient. Chief among these: the physical exam.

A recent article, [a joint production between Kaiser Health News and The Washington Post](#), outlined the importance of so-called "old-school" physical exams and the risks of an over-reliance on technology:

Both cases reflect a phenomenon that some prominent medical educators say has become increasingly commonplace as medicine becomes more technology-driven: the waning ability of doctors to use a physical exam to make an accurate diagnosis. Information gleaned from inspecting blood vessels at the back of the eye, observing a patient's walk, feeling the liver or checking fingernails can provide valuable clues to underlying diseases or incipient problems, they say.

But over the past few decades the physical diagnosis skills that were once the cornerstone of doctoring have withered, supplanted by a dizzying array of sophisticated, expensive tests.

The importance of these physical exams can't be understated. As costs rise, and more and more expensive tests are developed, the simple physical exam can often be the key to solving a medical mystery. And healthcare workspaces can be an effective bridge between the exam and the technology. From [Steelcase Health](#):

Insight: Technology is opening new opportunities in healthcare, and it should be fully incorporated in exam rooms. Smart devices, apps and web-based information are new tools for diagnosing and treating patients, accessing and sharing information, and communicating effectively.

By accommodating new and emerging technologies in spatial design, patients and clinicians alike can benefit from easy-to-access content and the ability to communicate and share information.

In this world of innovation and rapidly developing technology, it's important to remember the building blocks of healthcare – the physical exam and the exam room!

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