

Sanjay Gupta's 9 Biggest Health Issues Facing America



Dr. Sanjay Gupta recently posted [an Op-Ed on CNN.com](#) that detailed what he thinks are America's 9 biggest health issues going forward into the new year. Some of them are what you would expect, while a few are more unique perspectives that we wanted to highlight.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Gupta writes:

There aren't nearly enough doctors to care for the U.S. population. By some estimates, the country is already short of tens of thousands of doctors, a problem that will only get worse as the demand for care increases with our aging population. That could mean longer wait times for you when you need to make an appointment.

Among the serious repercussions stemming from the shortage is even more time and productivity lost in waiting rooms. This makes the proper and intelligent design of these spaces even more important. [Check out what we've written](#) on the problems arising from bad waiting experiences, including isolation, disconnection, and discomfort, and how Regard can solve for them.

HOSPITAL ERRORS AND INFECTIONS

Gupta asks:

Hospital mistakes and infections are still one of the leading causes of preventable death (indeed, some studies suggest “hospital-acquired conditions” kill more people than car accidents or diabetes). What else can hospitals do to prevent these mistakes and infections? Can technology like e-prescriptions and electronic health records prevent problems that most often occur: the mistakes caregivers make with a patient’s drugs?

Gupta says that most of these errors result from preventable caregiver mistakes. Technology can be a boon to healthcare, but mistakes are inevitable when caregivers and clinicians are overworked and stressed. [Respite areas and workspaces](#) designed to give clinicians privacy could be crucial to further lowering these error rates in 2015.

MORE DO-IT-YOURSELF HEALTH CARE: APPS AND TECHNOLOGY

According to Gupta:

Technology has made do-it-yourself patient care much easier. This goes beyond just a patient’s ability to look up their symptoms online. There are apps to help with autism, apps that can simulate a check-up, apps that can monitor conditions. But how does all this helping yourself make your health care better? How much is too much? And what does this mean for your privacy?

Technology has the ability to make a big impact in people’s wellbeing this year and into the future. Something to monitor, however, is the possibility of an over-reliance on apps to make diagnoses; we’ve written before on [the importance of the physical](#) and a face-to-face relationship with your doctor.

Missing work-life balance

Gupta writes:

Americans spend more time on the job than most other developed countries. We don’t get as much vacation, we don’t take what vacation we have, and we are prone to working nights and weekends. This stress has a negative impact on Americans’ health. What are companies doing to help? Can technology change this phenomenon?

Again, the value and importance of well-designed workspaces comes up. Especially as they are forced to work longer, harder shifts, clinicians and caregivers need proper respite areas for them to relax and recharge their batteries.

Any other health issues that Dr. Gupta left off his list?

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