Vol. 5 No. 2 (2026)

Pakistan Journal of Medical & Cardiological Review

https://pakjmcr.com/index.php/1/about

Online ISSN 3007-2387

Print ISSN 3007-2379

Rehman et al - 2026

DOI: http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20392004

AI-DRIVEN HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR HOSPITALS: AN EMPIRICAL PERFORMANCE AND SOCIO-TECHNICAL EVALUATION

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Keywords:

Artificial Intelligence; Hospital Administration; Public Sector; Delivery of Health Care; Machine Learning; Decision Support Systems, Clinical; Medical Records Systems, Electronic; Pakistan

Received on 05 Feb, 2026

Accepted on 19 Apr, 2026

Published on 26 May, 2026

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Abstract

Background: Public sector hospitals in developing nations face unprecedented patient overcrowding, operational bottlenecks, and severe resource constraints. While Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers data-driven optimization, empirical research evaluating its integration within resource-limited public health frameworks remains scarce.

Objective: Grounded in Socio-Technical Systems (STS) Theory, this study evaluates the empirical impact of AI-based systems on operational efficiency, triage accuracy, and predictive clinical risk modeling within public sector hospitals.

Method: A mixed-methods research design was deployed across five public sector hospitals in Peshawar, Pakistan, utilizing a curated dataset of 5,000 anonymized electronic health records (EHRs). Supervised machine learning pipelines—specifically Logistic Regression and Random Forest algorithms—were

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developed, trained, and cross-validated using a 70:30 data split. Social subsystem dynamics were captured qualitatively to analyze human-technology interactions.

Results: Quantitative evaluation demonstrated that AI integration significantly enhanced hospital performance indicators. Triage accuracy increased by 28%, and mean patient waiting times decreased by 22%. The Random Forest model achieved an 87% predictive accuracy (F1-score = 0.86) in identifying high-risk clinical deterioration cases. Furthermore, hospitals recorded a 19% improvement in bed utilization and a 15% reduction in diagnostic errors. Qualitative observations revealed that system efficacy depends directly on institutional technical readiness and user workflow adaptation.

Conclusion: AI-driven healthcare management systems significantly improve operational throughput and clinical precision in low-resource settings. To secure sustainable digital transformations, health policies must balance technical deployment with structured training paradigms for the healthcare workforce.

INTRODUCTION

In developing countries, public sector hospitals operate under intense structural stress characterized by exponential population growth, high burdens of infectious diseases, and severe infrastructure deficits. Emergency departments experience severe overcrowding, diagnostic backlogs, and personnel shortages, culminating in suboptimal patient care delivery and elevated clinical error rates (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). Traditional manual workflows fail to dynamically manage the erratic patient volumes typical of these environments, causing extensive delays in medical interventions.

Over the past decade, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transitioned from an experimental diagnostic tool into a core component of enterprise healthcare operations. Driven by

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advanced machine learning (ML) algorithms, AI systems process immense streams of clinical and administrative data to identify complex patterns, streamline resources, and guide clinical interventions (Topol, 2019). Within hospital management ecosystems, predictive analytics, deep learning diagnostic models, and automated clinical decision support systems (CDSS) provide real-time, evidence-based recommendations that minimize human cognitive errors (Davenport & Kalakota, 2019).

Global healthcare networks increasingly rely on comprehensive digital transformations—embedding hospital management information systems (HMIS) and electronic health records (EHRs) with intelligent algorithms to optimize scheduling, improve diagnostic precision, and predict patient mortality parameters (Rajkomar et al., 2019). However, the adoption curve remains highly uneven. While high-income regions leverage fully integrated digital infrastructure, low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) face structural bottlenecks that hinder the deployment of scalable digital health systems.

Research Gap

A significant portion of current medical literature focuses on the deployment of AI inside highly digitized, mature healthcare ecosystems across North America, Europe, and East Asia. While these frameworks validate substantial gains in predictive accuracy and clinical throughput, their findings are difficult to generalize directly to low-resource contexts (Rajkomar et al., 2019).

In Pakistan, empirical research investigating automated hospital management systems remains limited. Most available regional literature focuses on speculative, theoretical assessments rather than quantitative evaluations within operational public hospital

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environments (WHO, 2021). Crucial variables—including algorithm resilience under inconsistent data streams, user acceptance thresholds, and structural workflow disruption within underfunded institutions—remain unexamined. This empirical void prevents policymakers from developing contextual, evidence-based digital health guidelines.

Research Objectives

To address this knowledge gap, this study systematically evaluates the performance of AI-driven tools within public sector healthcare environments under four strategic objectives:

1. To quantitatively measure changes in operational throughput and patient waiting times after AI system integration.
2. To assess the precision improvements in emergency triage classification and diagnostic error mitigation.
3. To evaluate the mathematical reliability of supervised machine learning algorithms in predicting high-risk patient deterioration.
4. To analyze human-technology interaction patterns using the lens of Socio-Technical Systems Theory.

Literature Review

The application of machine learning algorithms to evaluate massive clinical datasets has redefined modern precision medicine, reducing diagnostic uncertainty and standardizing care protocols (Topol, 2019). Beyond direct clinical interventions, intelligent algorithms provide strong administrative advantages by dynamically managing patient scheduling, optimizing resource configurations, and mapping long-term operational needs (Davenport & Kalakota, 2019).

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In emergency and intensive care settings, machine learning frameworks consistently outperform classic linear risk-scoring methods by processing non-linear clinical indicators simultaneously, facilitating earlier preventative actions (Obermeyer & Emanuel, 2016). Deep learning frameworks integrated directly into EHR structures have successfully predicted inpatient mortality, readmission liabilities, and prolonged hospital stays (Rajkomar et al., 2019). Furthermore, automated scheduling and real-time patient tracking systems decrease structural delays, aligning clinical throughput directly with international best practices (WHO, 2021).

However, translating these algorithms to resource-constrained public hospitals introduces severe socio-technical challenges. Underlying algorithmic bias, fragmented data repositories, and strict privacy mandates represent constant implementation risks (Davenport & Kalakota, 2019; Topol, 2019). Public sector healthcare infrastructures in developing regions often feature manual entry systems, unstandardized data formats, and a lack of centralized digital networks, which can degrade the accuracy of standard machine learning models (Rajkomar et al., 2019).

To ensure sustainable adoption, organizations must optimize both technical frameworks and human operational environments simultaneously (Trist & Bamforth, 1951). In clinical spaces, this requires aligning algorithmic support with physician cognitive patterns, developing robust technology acceptance models, and structuring workflows to prevent system fragmentation.

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Method

Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design, blending quantitative machine learning models with qualitative structural observations. This approach allowed the study to measure technological accuracy statistically while contextualizing institutional adaptation patterns (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Setting and Data Collection

The study was conducted across five public sector teaching hospitals in Peshawar, Pakistan. A curated dataset containing 5,000 fully anonymized electronic health records was extracted from active hospital networks over a 12-month period. To maintain institutional confidentiality, the target sites were categorized using the following specific pseudonyms:

- Hospital A (Northern Teaching Hospital; n = 1,200)
- Hospital B (City General Hospital; n = 1,050)
- Hospital C (District Medical Complex; n = 980)
- Hospital D (Central Care Hospital; n = 1,300)
- Hospital E (West Teaching Unit; n = 470)

Variable Specification

The independent variable was specified as the deployment of integrated AI-based modules within the hospital infrastructure. The primary dependent operational and clinical variables included: (a) emergency triage classification efficiency, (b) mean patient

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waiting time, (c) high-risk clinical deterioration prediction, (d) bed occupancy rate optimization, and (e) diagnostic error rates.

Machine Learning Modeling

Two distinct algorithmic pipelines were constructed to process the data matrix:

1. Logistic Regression: Implemented to establish baseline classification performance and maintain structural model interpretability for binary risk outcomes (Obermeyer & Emanuel, 2016).
2. Random Forest: Deployed as an ensemble learning framework to capture complex, non-linear interactions among heterogeneous clinical indicators while minimizing overfitting (Breiman, 2001).

The predictive models used a 70:30 data split for training and testing. Data preprocessing steps included iterative missing value imputation, min-max feature scaling, and categorical one-hot encoding (Topol, 2019). Model classification accuracy was rigorously quantified via standard performance matrices:

$$\text{Precision} = TP / (TP + FP)$$

$$\text{Recall} = TP / (TP + FN)$$

$$\text{F1-score} = 2 \times (\text{Precision} \times \text{Recall}) / (\text{Precision} + \text{Recall})$$

Where TP represents True Positives, FP represents False Positives, and FN represents False Negatives within the clinical prediction registers.

Ethical Approval

Institutional clearance was obtained from all participating hospital administrations. Total data anonymization was strictly enforced, removing all patient identifiers to comply with international data security standards (WHO, 2021).

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Results

Machine Learning Model Performance

The Random Forest model demonstrated superior performance over Logistic Regression across all operational and clinical metrics, handling complex datasets effectively (Breiman, 2001). The ensemble model achieved an overall classification accuracy of 87% (F1-score = 0.86) when identifying high-risk clinical deterioration cases, whereas Logistic Regression achieved an accuracy baseline of 79% (F1-score = 0.77). This performance profile confirms that multi-variable ensemble learning techniques are highly suitable for processing complex electronic health data (Rajkomar et al., 2019).

Clinical and Operational System Throughput

The implementation of automated analytics modules across the five institutions yielded measurable improvements in clinical and administrative workflows:

- Emergency Triage Classification: Accuracy increased by 28%, significantly accelerating patient prioritization pathways (Obermeyer & Emanuel, 2016).
- Mean Patient Waiting Times: Decreased by 22% due to algorithmic scheduling optimization (WHO, 2021).
- Bed Utilization Efficiency: Improved by 19% across wards, helping reduce overcrowding.
- Diagnostic Error Rates: Decreased by 15%, driven by real-time clinical decision support loops (Topol, 2019).

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Discussion

The empirical findings confirm that integrating machine learning systems within resource-constrained public sector environments significantly improves operational efficiency and clinical outcomes. The observed 22% reduction in patient waiting times and 28% improvement in triage accuracy prove that automated decision tools are effective at managing overstretched infrastructure (Davenport & Kalakota, 2019). Furthermore, achieving an 87% predictive accuracy for critical clinical deterioration validates the capacity of machine learning to provide early risk warnings, even when operating with unstandardized data environments (Obermeyer & Emanuel, 2016).

However, the qualitative observations highlight that technical accuracy alone does not guarantee organizational success. Long-term integration depends directly on human factors, including system user acceptance, digital literacy levels, and workflow modifications (Trist & Bamforth, 1951). Structural challenges—such as initial staff resistance, irregular digital records, and limited financial capital—present ongoing scaling barriers in developing healthcare systems (Rajkomar et al., 2019).

To overcome these challenges, health ministries must prioritize targeted funding for foundational digital infrastructure, establish continuous training programs for medical staff, and enact strict data governance frameworks to ensure safe, sustainable AI integration (WHO, 2021).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Artificial Intelligence significantly improves operational efficiency and clinical accuracy within public sector hospitals. The implemented machine learning frameworks produced substantial, measurable improvements across critical

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performance indicators, including triage precision, waiting times, bed capacity optimization, and diagnostic error reduction.

Grounded in Socio-Technical Systems Theory, the study emphasizes that long-term digital health transformation requires optimizing technological platforms and human organizational workflows in tandem. Future research should evaluate multi-regional data matrices to assess long-term impacts on patient mortality, validate financial sustainability, and standardize national healthcare AI deployment frameworks.

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Print ISSN 3007-2379

DOI: http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20392004

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