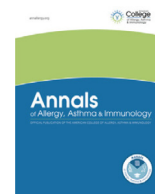




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Editorial

Technology in the clinic

The future is here?



Technology is one of those items with which all clinicians (probably everyone) seem to have a love-hate relationship. The electronic medical record has made documenting and billing patient encounters much easier, yet at the same time, it seems to have erected a barrier between the patient and provider. Along with the growth of the electronic health record has been an explosion in the use of handheld devices and health-related applications (apps). These apps allow for more engagement and involvement with patients, including health monitoring by providers. Related to the proliferation of apps has been the expansion of social media, a technology that at times feels more like a creature vacillating between connecting us all in a supportive hug and being hell-bent on destroying society as we know it. In this rapidly evolving technology world, what is a practicing clinician to do?

This issue of the *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology* explores these issues with several insightful and enjoyable articles to help you navigate these choppy waters. The use of technology broadly to engage patients is discussed by Maurer et al.¹ The authors provide an overview of the electronic health record and how the patient portal can be used to increase the engagement of patients. They then discuss newer apps that can be used to create a partnership between the patient and provider. Finally, there is a discussion of the growing use of artificial intelligence in allergy and immunology and how this may affect your practice—all for the benefit of your patients. Well, usually for the benefit of patients—take a look at this month's *Marginal zone* for a humorous take on artificial intelligence in allergy and immunology.²

The coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic has created substantial havoc on the health care system, and it changed the way care is provided. Whether this will have a long-lasting impact and what that impact will likely be is the topic of a perspective by Williams et al.³ These authors look into their crystal ball and attempt to predict what allergy and immunology practices will need to do in the future as a result of the impacts of the pandemic. It is interesting to note that this perspective was written in July 2021 just as the delta variant was gaining traction in the United States. This is an insightful article that provides suggestive guidance for how the pandemic has changed the way we practice allergy and immunology and what your practice may need to do in the future as a result.

In a most delightful review, Dr Lang⁴ explores how telemedicine is a disrupter to the health care system. This is truly an interesting read and not at all like traditional reviews. You will find it humorous and

full of insight that will keep you thinking on disruption in all areas of medicine—not just telemedicine. These types of disruptive innovations occur often and really do move the technology forward. Understanding how they do this and why they are so important will be beneficial to all of us who work with technology.

People either embrace social media or run from it; however, properly used social media can be a powerful tool to engage and support your patients. Patrick et al.⁵ discuss the types of social media and how you might consider using social media as a medical professional. This is not a “how to” manual as much as a what it is and an initial how-to-get-started discussion. The authors include much discourse on the correct and incorrect ways to use these platforms. Furthermore, they discuss strategies to counteract misinformation on social media. As such, even well-seasoned veterans of social media will find much utility in reading this review.

Whether we embrace or run from technology, it is here to stay and is becoming more and more critical to the daily practice of medicine. These technologies (and disruptive technologies, at that) have the potential to be used to increase patient engagement and satisfaction—all with the goal of improvising care delivery. This issue provides you with the knowledge to use these technologies to your practice's advantage and ultimately to improve your patients' health and well-being. Enjoy this issue and may your electronic medical record not crash!

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