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Health Care Is At A 'Crucial Point' On Its Journey To The Future Says Philips

by [Ashley Yeo](#)

For its fifth annual Future Health Index, Royal Philips chose to focus on the insights and needs of health care professionals below the age of 40, a group that often feels unheard, and yet will form the basis of the workforce over the next two decades. Getting it right from their point of view is vital.

"The findings of the Future Health Index (FHI) 2020 demonstrate that we are at a crucial moment in the journey to the future of health care." So said Jan Kimpen, chief medical officer at Royal Philips, as the group published the fifth annual edition in its series of reports.

The goal of the Indexes is to understand customers better and cater for their unmet needs, especially in relation to technology, Kimpen said in comments to *Medtech Insight*. The continued ability to satisfy these needs depends largely on the ability of health care professionals (HCPs) to play their role in delivering enhanced care enabled by innovative technologies.

The latest FHI in the Philips series, "Empowering the next generation to transform healthcare," illustrates that young professionals, who will be the basis of the health care workforce for the coming 20 years at least, need to be heard as much as their more experienced peers. Hence the decision by Philips to survey some 3,000 young doctors and nurses on their roles and needs, and their views on the shape of the health care system to come.

"We wanted to focus on the troubles that young health care professionals often go through, leading to high burn-out rates, people leaving the profession and staff shortages, i.e. the ominous signs we sometimes see in the ecosystem," said Kimpen. The FHI reflects how they feel about their work, whether their training prepared them for the realities of what their jobs demand, and how they feel about the transition to digitally-enabled health care.

The stakes are high. "If we don't adapt the health care delivery system to their needs, we will lose them, which is something we cannot afford," he said. The survey showed that, for HCPs, there

are gaps in skills, knowledge, data, and, of great concern, in the expectations they had before entering the profession and in the reality they live. 40% said the reality was different to the promises that attracted them into a health care career.

It also showed that young professionals have a "love-hate" relationship with digital technology, and that their working environment is very important in keeping them content and motivated in their professional life in the health care setting.

Not Prepared Well For The Business Workplace

Some 44% of respondents said their training did not prepare them well for the work at hand; although it was sufficient for the clinical aspects, it was not adequate for the administrative and business aspects of their roles. In this context, 80% were unaware/had very little notion of the concept of value-based health care. That was a surprising finding, in Kimpen's view, given that this is a theme that is widely talked about and, indeed, constitutes a large part of the future of health care.

Young HCPs look to their leaders to give them flexibility at work; 75% said they want a more flexible workplace for a better work-life balance. They also want to work in a collaborative environment. "Young HCPs look forward to working in such an environment, and within multidisciplinary teams," said Kimpen. 89% said this is an important criterion in how and where they choose their workplace.

Some 85% of the doctors surveyed said they were satisfied with working in their "smart hospital," where digital tools are integrated seamlessly into the human and patient care workflows. That compared to a lower 70% who voiced approval of working in their "analog" hospitals.

And young HCPs want their leaders to reduce their stress levels at work: 75% of nurses and doctors regularly report work-related stress, and around 30% of them have considered leaving the workforce as a result. It is clear that more stress minimization needs to be done by leaders, said Kimpen.

"Young HCPs have a balanced view of digitization – seeing it as a tool, not a goal." Jan Kimpen

Young HCPs "love" digital tools, but "hate" situations where data is not relevant or not

actionable; when there is not enough data; or when data-sharing restrictions impede diagnosis and therapy. They can also feel overwhelmed by the data and not know how to use it. But while they often struggle with this conundrum, they also have a balanced view of digitization – seeing it as a tool, not a goal.

Concluding the report, Kimpen noted that care is evolving into a continuous care model outside the hospital and clinic walls. The future will see innovative reimbursement models that center on value and outcomes, with technology and data playing a crucial role.

To ensure younger HCPs thrive in what will be an increasingly demanding environment, senior health care leaders have a duty to listen to their younger colleagues, said Kimpen. In this context, the findings in the FHI 2020 report will help the health care leaders of today empower this next generation of HCPs, and thereby retain talent in the face of the growing demands of modern health care.