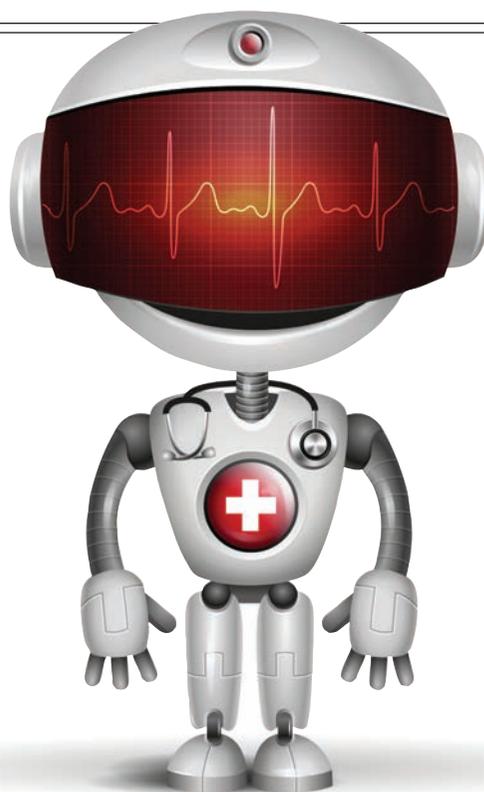


Will Physicians Be Replaced by Robots?

How should we react
to automation?

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The author of an article in the June, 2017, issue of *Bloomberg Businessweek* focused on determining which professions are most, and least, likely to be replaced by automation in the future. Various careers are compared by their average salaries and probabilities of being replaced by robots. Salaries are arranged in four categories—\$0 to \$49,630, \$49,630 to \$100,000, \$100,000 to \$200,000, and above \$200,000. The likelihood of being replaced by automation is compared as percentages, ranging from zero to one hundred percent probability.

A sampling of the occupations that fall into the category of having a high probability of being replaced by automation—the 80 to 100% range—include two major salary groupings. Cashier, telemarketer, retail sales, legal secretary, bookkeeper, clerk, telemarketer, cashier, accountant or auditor, loan officer, real estate agent, and HR assistant are all in the “less than \$49,630” range, while those in this high probability category who are making between \$49,630 and \$100,000 are accountant, loan officer, executive assistant, and sales. No occupations in this most precari-

ous range of 80%—100% chance of being replaced by automation has an average salary higher than \$100,000.

Only two occupations depicted fall into the salary range of \$100,000 to \$200,000. These are financial advisor and “manager.” Of these two, financial advisors face a 60% chance

\$200,000 include physician assistant, pharmacist, lawyer, financial manager, general manager, dentist, and CEO; however, of these, only dentist and CEO are even close to the \$200,000 level.

You may have guessed what is coming next. What clearly stands out

Physicians and surgeons sit alone in this secure position—above the \$200,000 average salary level, with a zero percent probability of its services being replaced by robots.

of being replaced by automation, and “managers” face only a 20% chance.

A sampling of professions for which the probability of being replaced by automation is lowest—between zero and 20%—and which have average salaries below \$100,000 includes paramedic, nurse, coach, chef, fitness trainer, hairdresser, preschool teacher, secondary school teacher, mechanical engineer, peace officer, and speech pathologist. Those in this range with an average salary between \$100,000 and

is that there is one, and only one, profession listed that has an average salary higher than \$200,000. This is also the only profession that falls into the category of having a 0% chance of being replaced by automation. This profession is physician and surgeon. Obviously, any reader who learns of this study cannot help but notice that physicians and surgeons sit alone in this secure position—above the \$200,000 average salary level, with a zero percent probability of its services

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being replaced by robots. Will this sound to the layman as if physicians are overburdened and underpaid?

things unique to his/her job that can be upsetting, and no professional, other than the physician, has the advantages that are highlighted in this study. I think that as more patients

cess to care, and push for changes to cut unnecessary paperwork and burdensome government regulations. These physicians are striving to make changes that will provide more time for direct patient care—something that is in alignment with patients' goals. Patients need to know that their doctors who are in well-paid, secure jobs are appreciative of their situation and are striving to make changes in the healthcare system that focus on the patient's experience, enabling them to receive the most superior service possible at reasonable cost. **PM**

Patients need to know that doctors who are in well-paid, secure jobs are appreciative of this fact and are striving to make changes in the healthcare system.

This information, and the perception of us that it creates for our patients, is significant for a number of reasons. There is no question that there are currently many annoyances associated with practicing medicine about which physicians are rightfully upset, and these need to be addressed; however, to gain public support for our position on needed healthcare changes, physicians must recognize that every professional has

become aware of information such as is presented in this article, they will be less sympathetic towards physicians who complain about declining reimbursements and workplace irritants.

Patients will, however, be supportive allies of those physicians who work to improve their profession through their local, state, and national associations—who work to improve quality of care, increase patient ac-



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