

Best Practices for Selecting a Responsible Al Partner

The implementation of AI powered technologies is rapidly accelerating in the healthcare sector

Healthcare leaders must be strategic in choosing the ideal technology partner; ensuring key stakeholder engagement both pre- and post-investment; and considering crucial factors like ethics, equity, data privacy and security. Selecting the right Al vendor is a strategic decision, and one that requires healthcare systems to have a framework in mind, and ensure the key stakeholders are involved and engaged throughout the process.

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KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHOOSING AN AI PARTNER

- 1. Clinical Evidence
- 2. Operational Efficiencies
- 3. Top Security Methods

There are critical factors to consider when selecting an Al vendor; those factors include their clinical experience, accuracy, real world experience, bias, ethics, and ensuring top notch security methods protecting patient data.

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During a recent Becker's Healthcare webinar sponsored by Viz.ai[®], Prem Batchu-Green, vice president of clinical at Viz.ai, moderated a discussion with healthcare leaders on the factors that often are top of mind as organizations evaluate and adopt AI technologies. Panelists included:

- **Snehal Gandhi,** MD, chief medical information officer and medical director, division of hospital medicine, Cooper University Health Care (Camden, N.J.)
- Alex Vasserman, DNP, RN, corporate director of business continuity and informatics, Jackson Health System Miami



Viz.ai is a HIPAA-compliant AI platform that streamlines healthcare data, AI-powered data analysis and actionable alerts for suspected disease, supporting faster diagnosis, care coordination and communication for clinical teams. Viz.ai has developed more than 30 AI-assisted care pathways and algorithms across multiple service lines and is used by more than 1,600 hospitals and health systems.

Healthcare organizations are aiming to leverage AI responsibly

The interest around AI has industry leaders eager to understand and identify the best AI solutions for their organizations' needs and use cases – and healthcare is no exception.

For healthcare leaders, top priorities prompting the use of AI tools are improvements in operational efficiency, clinical workflows and patient experiences and outcomes. However, due to the impact that social determinants of health can have on both individuals' health status and the care they receive, it is paramount that any AI algorithms used to streamline efficiency and workflows – and that are fed with patient data – are free of biases and developed through a health equity lens.

"AI models can perpetuate biases that may be present in the training data," Dr. Gandhi said. "This may lead to disparities, so AI model transparency is something we always look at."

Vasserman reflected on his patient population and how this guides organization's decision-making around AI tools. "From my experience in a county hospital serving

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the underprivileged patient population in Miami, prioritizing ethical, equitable and inclusive AI applications is a priority," he said. "It's a requirement when looking for AI vendors that have the potential to become our business partners."

Patient data security is another priority for healthcare administrators assessing AI vendor partnerships. "There is sometimes a lack of industry standards when it comes to protecting AI data, so we're very happy to work with Viz.ai, which has decided to voluntarily test for SOC 2 Type 2 compliance," Vasserman said. SOC 2 Type 2 is a voluntary standard that outlines how organizations should manage customer data.

Selecting the right AI vendors requires careful evaluation

Beyond the external momentum driving AI adoption, hospitals and health systems also face internal pressures from clinical and non-clinical staff interested in incorporating different AI technologies in their practices. Satisfying those requests – while ensuring investments in new tools comply with ethical and equitable prerequisites, data security standards and transparency – requires careful vendor vetting.

"We don't just implement technology for the sake of implementing technology; we look to see if there's a use case scenario," Dr. Gandhi said. He described how the vendor evaluation process at Cooper University Health Care involves the end users – asking them to identify the specific problems they are aiming to solve and the key performance indicators they expect to drive in using the technology. The AI investment request is then ranked amongst other organizational priorities and expectations set regarding budget and adoption time frame. That entire process also includes ongoing user education and change management.

Many health systems have organizational priorities, alongside an AI governance structure to support AI vendor and technology evaluation. Decision-makers look at whether and how leveraging AI can help achieve those priorities, which include scaling AI to cardiology, emergency medicine (to reduce patient wait times) and remote patient monitoring in rural communities. Working with a vendor like Viz.ai, who has experience supporting healthcare systems AI governance process, or similar framework can help streamline the overall process.

The gold standard for selecting an AI vendor and technology is the availability of transparent, real-world evidence of clinical results, as well as evidence that the benefits of using the technology accrue mainly to the patient and not to the system, Vasserman said. "If the vendor has conducted randomized control trials, that's the vendor you seek – that's the trust factor," he said.

Lastly, healthcare institutions seeking to partner with a reliable AI vendor should inquire about the vendor's implementation record with other organizations.

Alternatively, they can also call other organizations within or beyond their broader partner network for references. "There's a lot of pre-work that goes into it before we partner with a vendor," Dr. Gandhi said.

Viz.ai's partnership style breeds trust by providing ongoing strategic + service support

Cooper University Health Care is one of the many healthcare organizations that have chosen to partner with Viz.ai to introduce AI technologies. The organization plans to implement the Viz.ai One[™] suite of algorithms across the enterprise.

Dr. Gandhi said Cooper University Health Care initially implemented just one of Viz.ai's modules, but after seeing and experiencing the vendor's level of support and dependability decided to extend the partnership to other areas.

"What's important to us is the ability to add algorithms that can meet clinical needs across different specialties and show some economic value in the long term – and Viz.ai has been able to demonstrate that," he said.

Viz.ai's VP of Clinical, Prem Batchu-Green, acknowledged that the AI partnership selection process is something most organizations spend a fair amount of time on, and for good reason. "It's always a challenging decision to make, especially when you're moving in the direction of identifying one partner that might have all of those solutions," she said.





Vasserman, who has worked at several organizations that have used Viz.ai's algorithms, reaffirmed the technology vendor's high commitment to ensuring its algorithms are properly implemented. "When you present the results of published studies and FDA-cleared algorithms [as Viz.ai has done], it blows cautious optimism into a fully expandable change management process," he said. "So having the right vendor is the key, but having an engaged, right vendor is even more important."

Internal stakeholder engagement is key

Going back to his earlier point about the importance of end-user engagement in the vendor vetting process, Dr. Gandhi reiterated the criticality of this process – this time with respect to ensuring successful partnership *after* a vendor and technology have been chosen.

"Before we even embark on a project, we make sure that all the necessary stakeholders are involved and we have agreement from them that they are going to be actively participating," he said. "We also have agreement from the organizational executives that this is a strategic initiative that we want to implement. We then set the timelines and make sure that there's enough time allocated to ensuring the project is successful."

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Looking forward, AI's adoption in healthcare is likely to accelerate to the point where it is no longer a case of matching discrete technologies to discrete use cases, but ultimately spans the entire organization.

To get there, AI technologies will need to convincingly show that they can help clinical and other decisionmakers unearth the most relevant and actionable information from the troves of data that healthcare organizations are already sitting on.

"Most healthcare systems are facing the same dilemma: They have a lot of data, but they don't have enough *useful* data to make a decision," Vasserman said. "This is where AI can make a dramatic change for our practice by eliminating wait times to analyze patients, [increasing the visibility of] social determinants of health and determining what is needed before discharge without waiting for social workers or case managers to initiate the conversation. To me, that's the exciting part of AI moving into mainstream healthcare."

To learn more, watch our on-demand webinar: <u>https://www.viz.ai/webinars/responsible-ai-streamlining-</u> <u>care-enterprise-wide</u>