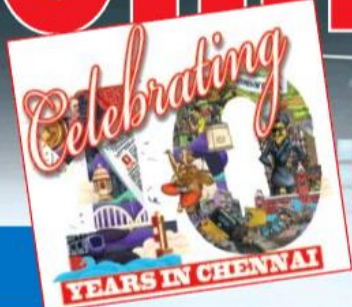


TECH Chennai Tin



WILL TAKE CARE OF

HEALTH



WITH WOMEN OPTING TO GET MARRIED LATE, OOCYTE BANKING WILL BECOME MORE PREVALENT. HOWEVER, ISSUES RELATED TO INFERTILITY WILL BE ON THE RISE. BUT THERE WILL BE A DECLINE IN EMBRYO BANKING, SINCE STABLE RELATIONS ARE BECOMING A THING OF THE PAST

— DR KAMALA SELVARAJ, GYNAECOLOGIST AND ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, GG HOSPITAL

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Mr X has cold and mild fever. He walks into a kiosk and feeds in his details into a computer there. After a few minutes, a prescription pops up on the screen. He okay's it, and the machine dispenses the medicines; while the consultation charges get deducted automatically from his bank account. No, this is not a scene from a sci-fi movie, but a reality in the coming years, say Chennai's health experts. With artificial intelligence (AI), automation and technology coming together to diagnose ailments, and treat patients, Chennai, the health capital of India, would be in the forefront of providing world-class treatment by 2028, opine doctors. We run a quick scan, talk to medical and healthcare experts, to know how specific areas of healthcare would fare 10 years from now.

AI WILL PLAY A GREAT ROLE IN DIABETES MANAGEMENT

"Diabetes is no longer the rich man's disease," starts off Dr V Mohan, chairman and chief diabetologist, Dr. Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centres. "Within a decade, around 35% of those above 20 will be suffering from diabetes," he says, and adds, "We can expect a population of nearly 12 million people in the city by 2028. Of the lot, a large number of those who are pre-diabetic may turn diabetic. And the life expectancy going up by 2028 will automatically increase the number of cases."

He says that technology and advancement in healthcare have been improving end results. "Five years ago a diabetic patch was not even heard of, but now, the glucose level can be monitored minute-by-minute using a patch," says Dr Mohan. "We are already utilising technology to create awareness by way of sending messages and alerts through cell

phones and apps that reach a large number of people. In the next decade, it's expected that automation and AI will play a great role in diabetes management." But even though he is hopeful of newer medicines that help manage the disease better, Dr Mohan cautions, "The onset of diabetes at a young age, say someone in his 20s or 30s, will be the real challenge in the coming decade."



PEOPLE WILL BE LESS SPECTACLE-DEPENDENT

"Laser surgeries will become the norm; people will not have to wear glasses. Also, cataract surgeries with presbyopia correcting lenses would mean people will be less spectacle-dependent," says Dr VJjay Shankar, MD, Shankar Eye Care. Artificial cornea will minimise rejections by the host body in corneal transplants, and "we should be able to reverse glaucoma-induced nerve damage and vision loss. Retinal transplants and artificial retinas using microchips will become a reality in 10 years' time," he adds.

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THE MODALITIES OF TREATMENT IN THE FIELD OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY WILL EVEN TAKE CARE OF SCREENING FOR DOWN'S BABIES AND CHENNAI HOSPITALS HAVE STATE-OF-ART TECHNIQUES TO INCREASE THE SUCCESS RATE OF IVF/ICSI

— DR GEETHA HARIPRIYA, MD, PRASHANTH FERTILITY RESEARCH CENTRE

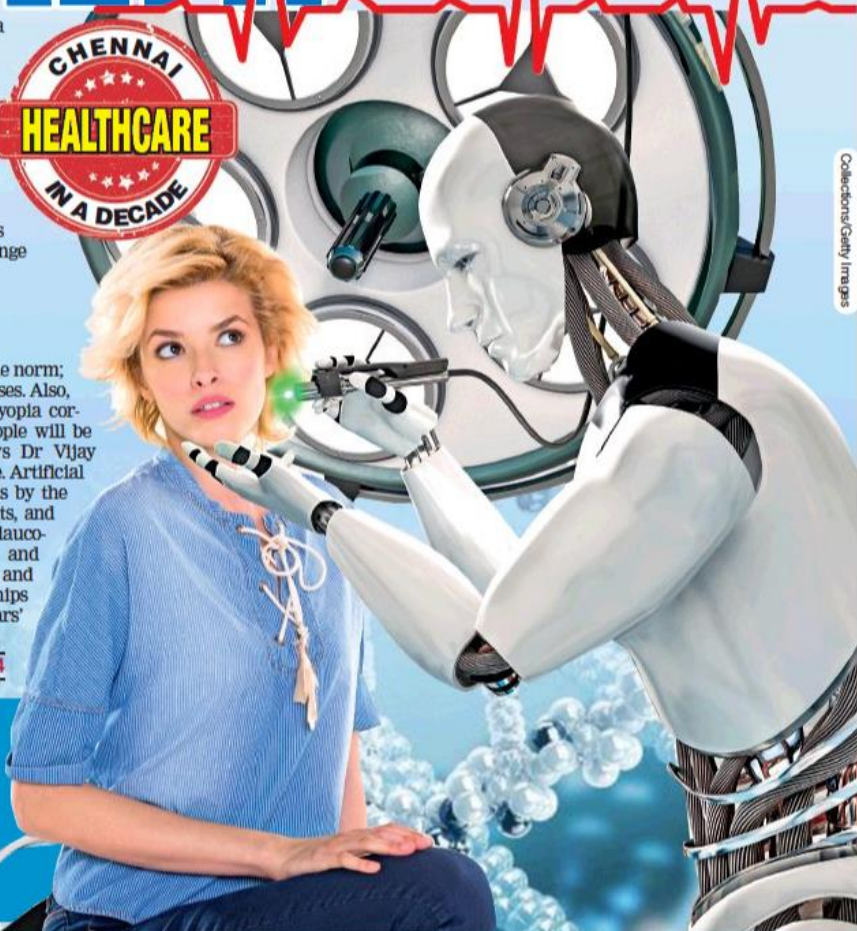


Illustration: Getty Images

AI, NANO CHIPS, LONGEVITY, AND MORE BY 2028

Collections/Getty Images

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YOUNGSTERS WILL BE VERY LOOK-CONSCIOUS

While metros like Mumbai and Bangalore are ahead of our city when it comes to cosmetic procedures, we are also fast catching up, say experts. Dr Chytra V Anand, celebrity cosmetic dermatologist and founder of Kosmoderma Skin and Hair Clinic, says that in the next decade, the corporate culture would have ensured that youngsters know the importance of looking good. And so, demand for getting acne treatment, peeling, laser hair removal and correction procedures would have increased. "Peeling, laser, Botox and plastic surgeries may not be a taboo and in the coming years people will openly discuss these things. Men will also increasingly opt for hair treatments/transplants and belly fat reduction," she says, adding, "Waxing will be passé and laser hair removal will become more popular."

EMBRYO BANKING WILL DECLINE

More women will come forward to freeze their eggs, opines Dr Kamala Selvaraj, renowned gynaecologist and associate director of GG Hospitals. "Now many women are opting to get married late, and hence oocyte banking will become more prevalent. However, issues related to infertility will be on the rise. But there will be a decline in embryo banking, since stable relations are becoming a thing of the past. When no one is sure as to how long a marriage

THE GOOD OLD-FASHIONED FAMILY PHYSICIAN, AS AGAINST THE POPULARITY OF THE SUPER-SPECIALITY HOSPITALS, WILL MAKE A COMEBACK. PEOPLE WILL INCREASINGLY BECOME AWARE OF THE ROLE PLAYED BY A FAMILY PHYSICIAN AND THAT'S GOING TO BE A HEALTHY TREND



— DR ARUNACHALAM, MD, ARUN VIJAYA HOSPITALS



YEARS IN CHENNAI

will last, not many may want to freeze an embryo and use it later to get pregnant," she says. Dr Goetha Haripriya, MD, Prashanth Fertility Research Centre, says that "the modalities of treatment in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology will even take care of screening for Down's babies." She adds, "Chennai hospitals have state-of-art techniques to increase the success rate of IVF/ICSI."

While there is an all-time increase in cases of infertility, fibroids and PCODs, the silver lining would be that Ayurveda would have made advancements in exploring this aspect, say practitioners. "In the coming years, people need not depend on hormonal therapies. The increasing popularity of Ayurvedic interventions is expected to bring down the cases of



infertility, caesarians and uterus removals drastically," says Dr Sai Deepa, Ayurveda physician and researcher.

LIFE EXPECTANCY WILL INCREASE

Dr Arunachalam, director, Arun Vijaya Hospitals, says, "In a decade's time, the over-dependence of parents on children will be a thing of the past. Elders may opt for community living with facilities like common kitchen, and elder-friendly accommodation and care will become the norm." He adds, "Climate change may throw certain challenges and we can't rule out the outbreak of vector-borne diseases. But increased awareness will ensure that communicable diseases will come down drastically." But Dr Arunachalam also foresees a comeback of the good old-fashioned family physician, as against the popularity of the super-speciality hospitals. "Even insurance companies have now started insisting on visiting a general medical practitioner as the initial step. People will increasingly become aware of the role played by a family physician and that's going to be a healthy trend," he says.

NANO TECHNOLOGY, AI AND AUTOMATION

By 2028, we might all get a chip that contains our vital statistics and the entire patient history which the doctor can access with just the click of a button. "Soon, thanks to nano-technology, one may not have to take a handful of medicines, for different conditions, but one single tablet may take care of a set of diseases," says Dr Arunachalam. Sandeep Balakrishnan, founder, One Glance, one of the healthcare startups from the city, says, "In the coming years, AI, electronic medical data and telemedicine is going to revolutionise the way we consult doctors."

MEDICAL TOURISM

Namma Chennai sees an average of 150 international patients visiting the city for treatment on a daily basis. This number will only increase, opine experts, as we will become world-famous for our quality healthcare at competitive rates. Even alternative medicines will catch up in 10 years, says Dr Nedungadi V Haridas, of Dr Nedungadi's Ayurvedic Centre. "Even now we get patients, including spo-

WISH LIST FOR THE FUTURE



Dr V Sethuraman, Medical director, Zi Clinic and actor

- Patient medical history identifier (data-driven healthcare) to be created so that all healthcare institutions can quickly know the patient's complete medical history
- Separate lane to be implemented for ambulances on the roads. Air ambulances for the gold-

en hour be made affordable

- Integrating telemedicine service online, so that it will be freely available for all people in times of need
- Protocols for treatments must be standardised across the nation
- Free training and CPR education for all

rtisppers, from the US and the Emirates top for treatment. In the coming years, we might be able to expand and be able to provide an integrated medical approach to foreign patients," he says. Detox will become a routine, and more people will turn to Ayurveda and other traditional treatments, he adds. KS Guru Prasad, a research scholar in medical tourism, says, "Replacement surgeries, bariatric surgeries and infertility treatments will be the common areas that will attract foreign patients in the next decade. It will be more like a treatment-cum-vacation for them," he says. "And so, down the line, medical tourism will be a major contributor to our economy."

WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO REVERSE GLAUCOMA-INDUCED NERVE DAMAGE AND VISION LOSS. RETINAL TRANSPLANTS AND ARTIFICIAL RETINAS USING MICROCHIPS WILL BECOME A REALITY IN 10 YEARS' TIME



— DR VIJAY SHANKAR, MD, SHANKAR EYE CARE

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— DR V MOHAN, CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF DIABETOLOGIST, DR. MOHAN'S DIABETES SPECIALITIES CENTRES