The Bioscan AN INTERNATIONAL QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF LIFE SCIENCES
21(1) S (1) 860-863, 2026 www.thebioscan.com

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN NURSING – A TRANSFORMATIVE BOON OR AN EMERGING CHALLENGE

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.63001/tbs.2026.v21.i01.S.I(1).pp860-863

KEYWORDS
Artificial intelligence, Nursing, transformative boon, Emerging Challenge

Received on:25-02-2026

Accepted on: 10-03-2026

Published on: 20-03-2026

ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has rapidly emerged as a transformative force across global healthcare systems, influencing clinical decision-making, administrative efficiency, patient monitoring and diagnostic accuracy. In the nursing profession, AI is reshaping traditional practices by supporting clinical judgement, enhancing patient safety and alleviating workload burden [1]. In India and worldwide, the integration of AI-driven tools such as predictive analytics, electronic health records (EHR) automation, virtual nursing assistants and smart monitoring systems has demonstrated significant potential to improve the quality of care [2]. Despite these benefits, AI adoption raises ethical, professional and technical challenges, including concerns regarding job displacement, data privacy, technology dependency, skill gaps and the potential loss of human touch in compassionate care [3]. This article explores whether AI is a boon or curse within the nursing profession by analysing its advantages, limitations and practical implications in diverse healthcare settings. Evidence from global and Indian healthcare environments highlights that AI, when implemented responsibly, can augment rather than replace nurses, offering opportunities for skill development, improved outcomes and safer care delivery. However, unregulated or poorly integrated AI systems may generate clinical, ethical and organisational risks. The paper concludes that AI is neither inherently a boon nor a curse; rather, its impact depends on how nurses, policymakers and healthcare institutions adapt, regulate and integrate these technologies [4].

INTRODUCTION

Major depressive Artificial Intelligence has become a major driver of innovation within modern healthcare, especially in the post-COVID era where digital transformation accelerated exponentially across hospitals and community health systems [5]. AI refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as decision-making, pattern recognition, problem-solving and predictive analysis [1]. In nursing, AI-based applications now assist with clinical documentation, triage, early detection of complications, patient education and resource management. The global healthcare AI market has grown rapidly, with projections indicating a substantial increase in adoption in both developed and developing countries [6]. In India, government initiatives—such as the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)—have encouraged digitization and AI-supported healthcare delivery, making AI increasingly relevant to nursing practice [7]. Breastfeeding is the most natural and beneficial way to nourish infants, supporting their growth, brain development, and protection from infections, obesity, and chronic diseases[55]. The introduction of AI has sparked debate among educators, clinicians and policymakers regarding whether the technology will enhance or undermine the nursing profession. Proponents argue that AI reduces workload, minimizes errors and strengthens evidence-based care [8]. Critics, however, fear that AI could replace certain nursing functions, diminish interpersonal care and create dependence on technology [3]. This article examines both perspectives while exploring how AI affects clinical practice, nursing education, leadership roles and healthcare management.

1. Evolution of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare and Nursing

The evolution of AI in global healthcare began with early rule-based systems in the 1970s and advanced significantly with machine learning and deep learning after 2010 [9]. Nursing adopted AI gradually as hospitals shifted from manual documentation to electronic health record (EHR) systems and

automated data management tools [10]. Today, AI supports predictive modelling, real-time monitoring and clinical decision support systems (CDSS), making nursing workflows more efficient and error-free [2]

In India, AI integration accelerated after the launch of national digital health initiatives and private-sector advancements in telehealth and hospital automation [7]. AI tools are increasingly used in tertiary hospitals for patient monitoring, ICU decision support, staffing optimization and documentation accuracy [11]. This digital shift reflects a global trend in which nurses are becoming active participants in technologically advanced care delivery.

2. AI as a Boon in the Nursing Profession

2.1 Improved Clinical Decision-Making

AI-powered diagnostic tools analyse clinical data more rapidly than humans and support early recognition of conditions such as sepsis, stroke, arrhythmias and respiratory failure [12]. These systems alert nurses to critical changes, enabling faster interventions and reducing mortality. Studies show that predictive AI models help nurses identify high-risk patients and prevent complications [13].

2.2 Enhanced Patient Monitoring

Smart sensors, wearable devices and remote patient monitoring systems provide real-time updates to nurses, improving surveillance in ICUs, emergency departments and home-care settings [14]. AI-enabled early warning scores (EWS) assist nurses in prioritizing high-risk patients and reducing response time [15].

2.3 Automation of Routine Tasks

AI chatbots, automated triage systems and virtual nursing assistants reduce the documentation burden on nurses by assisting with charting, medication reminders and patient inquiries [16]. In many hospitals, natural language processing (NLP) tools automatically convert nurses' voice inputs into clinical notes, saving time and reducing administrative load [17].

2.4 Reduced Errors and Increased Patient Safety

Medication errors are a major concern in clinical practice. AI-based systems verify drug interactions, allergies and dosage appropriateness, assisting nurses in medication administration [18]. Machine-learning algorithms cross-check patient data and flag inconsistencies, thereby improving accuracy and reducing sentinel events [19].

2.5 Strengthening Nursing Education

AI-based virtual simulation platforms provide realistic practice environments for nursing students, enabling skill development without risking patient safety [20]. Such platforms enhance clinical reasoning, teamwork and procedural training. In India, nursing institutions increasingly use AI-driven simulators and virtual anatomy labs to improve learning outcomes [21].

2.6 Workload Reduction and Burnout Prevention

Nurses worldwide face increasing workload burdens. AI supports task prioritization, workflow automation and scheduling optimization [22]. Studies indicate that AI-guided staffing systems improve nurse-to-patient ratios and reduce burnout rates among nurses [23]. Menstruation is a natural biological process that marks the onset of reproductive maturity in females, and proper menstrual hygiene is essential for maintaining physical health, preventing infections, and supporting the overall well-being of adolescent girls [56].

3. AI as a Curse in the Nursing Profession

3.1 Threat to Human Touch and Compassionate Care

One of the greatest concerns is the fear that AI may weaken the therapeutic nurse–patient relationship. Nursing is built on empathy, communication and emotional connection—qualities that AI cannot replicate [24]. Overreliance on technology may lead to reduced bedside interaction, distancing nurses from patients emotionally and psychologically [3].

3.2 Risk of Job Displacement

While AI is intended to support nurses, some tasks traditionally performed by nurses—such as triage, documentation and patient education—are increasingly automated [25]. International projections indicate that certain low-skill or repetitive roles may be replaced by automation in the future [26]. However, experts note that AI will change nursing roles rather than eliminate them [27].

3.3 Ethical and Legal Challenges

AI raises ethical concerns regarding accountability, transparency and algorithmic bias. If an AI system makes an incorrect recommendation that leads to patient harm, determining responsibility between nurse, institution and technology provider becomes complex [28]. Nurses must navigate issues related to patient autonomy, informed consent and confidentiality in an AI-driven environment [29].

3.4 Data Privacy and Cybersecurity Risks

As AI depends on massive amounts of patient data, breaches can compromise confidentiality and trust. In India, concerns persist about data storage, consent and misuse in digital health platforms [30]. Globally, healthcare remains a major target for cyberattacks, making AI systems vulnerable to hacking, system failures and data manipulation [31].

3.5 Dependence on Technology and Skill Erosion

Excessive reliance on AI may weaken nurses' clinical judgement and reduce opportunities to practice critical thinking. Over time, this may result in "deskilling," where nurses become dependent on automated systems rather than their own assessment abilities [32]

4. Challenges of Implementing AI in Nursing Practice

4.1 Limited Technological Infrastructure

Many healthcare facilities—especially in developing countries—lack the digital infrastructure required for advanced AI implementation. Issues such as poor internet connectivity, limited access to electronic medical records and outdated hospital information systems hinder the smooth adoption of AI tools [33]. Smaller hospitals and rural health centres often face financial constraints, making AI upgrades difficult [34]

4.2 Skill Gap and Need for Training

Nurses must acquire competencies in digital literacy, data interpretation and AI-assisted clinical workflows. However, training programs for AI-based nursing practice are still insufficient in many regions, including India [35]. Nursing curricula often lag behind technological advancements, leaving nurses inadequately prepared for AI-integrated healthcare environments [36].

4.3 High Costs of AI Systems

AI tools, software integration and digital infrastructure upgrades require major financial investments. While larger hospitals and corporate healthcare systems may afford these technologies, government hospitals and rural healthcare centres struggle with cost limitations [37]. Maintenance, licensing and cybersecurity protection add further financial burdens [38].

4.4 Resistance from Nursing Staff

Resistance to AI is common among nurses who feel uncertain about its impact on clinical autonomy or fear job displacement [39]. Lack of hands-on training, unclear protocols and insufficient leadership support contribute to mistrust and hesitation in adopting AI systems [40].

4.5 Algorithmic Bias and Inequity

AI systems are only as unbiased as the data used to train them. If datasets lack diversity, AI may produce inaccurate predictions for underrepresented populations [41]. This issue is critical in multicultural countries like India, where socioeconomic and ethnic variations influence disease patterns and healthcare needs [42].

5. AI in Different Domains of Nursing

5.1 AI in Clinical Nursing Practice

AI supports clinical assessment by identifying subtle physiological changes that may be missed during routine observation. Predictive

tools for sepsis, cardiac arrest and respiratory failure assist nurses in making rapid decisions [12]. Automated infusion pumps, smart beds and robotic aids improve patient safety and reduce physical strain on nurses [43].

5.2 AI in Nursing Management

Nursing administrators use AI-based dashboards to predict admission rates, allocate staff efficiently and analyse patient flow trends [44]. Machine-learning algorithms can optimize duty rosters, reduce overtime and balance workloads more effectively than manual scheduling methods [22]. AI also assists in supply-chain management, reducing shortages and ensuring timely availability of medications and equipment [45].

5.3 AI in Nursing Education

AI-based teaching tools, adaptive learning platforms and virtual labs personalize learning experiences for students [20]. Intelligent tutoring systems provide real-time feedback and track student performance, helping educators identify learning gaps [46]. During the COVID-19 pandemic, AI-enabled virtual simulation became essential for skill training when clinical exposure was limited [47].

5.4 AI in Community Health Nursing

Mobile health (mHealth) applications and AI-driven telehealth platforms help nurses monitor chronic diseases, maternal health and infectious disease outbreaks in rural communities [48]. Predictive algorithms assist community health nurses in early detection of epidemics and resource planning [49]. AI-supported health education tools also enhance communication with populations that have limited health literacy [50]

6. The Future of Nursing in an AI-Driven Healthcare System

6.1 Collaborative Practice Between Humans and AI

The future of nursing will be shaped by a hybrid approach where AI handles data-intensive tasks while nurses focus on empathy, communication and critical judgement [27]. AI is expected to function as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for human nurses.

6.2 Redefining Nursing Roles

AI will expand nursing roles into areas such as data analytics, informatics, robotics supervision and AI-system evaluation [51]. New specialties—like "AI Nurse Coordinator" and "Clinical Informatics Nurse"—are emerging globally [52]. Nurses will increasingly participate in interdisciplinary teams involving data scientists, engineers and clinicians.

6.3 Policy Development and Ethical Regulation

Strong ethical frameworks and clear guidelines are essential to prevent misuse of AI. Regulatory bodies must ensure transparency, data privacy and accountability in AI-assisted clinical care [53]. In India, ongoing development of digital health policies aims to address these future challenges [30].

6.4 Strengthening Nursing Education and Research

Future curricula must include AI literacy, digital competence and evidence-based practice training [36]. Nurse researchers will play a vital role in evaluating AI tools for safety, accuracy and clinical relevance [54].

CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence has become an influential component of modern healthcare, offering transformative possibilities for the nursing profession. Globally and in India, AI has demonstrated significant potential to improve clinical outcomes, enhance decision-making, reduce workload and elevate patient safety. It supports nurses through predictive analytics, automated documentation, real-time monitoring and advanced simulation in education. These advancements position AI as a powerful tool that can strengthen the nursing workforce and contribute to safer, more efficient healthcare delivery.

However, AI also introduces substantial concerns. Ethical dilemmas, data privacy risks, high implementation costs, algorithmic bias, resistance from staff and the potential erosion of human touch create legitimate challenges. Nursing is inherently compassionate, relational and human-centered—qualities that cannot be replaced by machines. Therefore, the fear that AI may overshadow interpersonal care remains a crucial consideration.

Whether AI becomes a boon or curse for nursing ultimately depends on how it is implemented, regulated and integrated. Responsible adoption requires strong ethical policies, adequate training, equitable access, and an approach that positions AI as a supportive partner—not a replacement—for nurses. When effectively managed, AI can greatly augment the professional capacity of nurses, empowering them to deliver holistic, efficient and compassionate care. Thus, AI should be viewed not as a threat, but as an evolving opportunity that can shape a more technologically advanced and patient-centered future for the nursing profession.

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