

EMRAD Innovation Newsletter

Bi-Monthly Newsletter



THE AI DIAGNOSTIC FUNDING - NEXT STEP FOR OVERCOMING AI BARRIERS?

By Chiamaka P. Ojiako

The announcement of the £21 million ring-fenced funding by the Department of Health and Social Care to rollout Artificial Intelligence (AI) has elicited mixed reactions and probably more questions than have answers.

Before getting into the weeds, these are some details about the funding, referred to as the AI Diagnostic Funding.

The AI Diagnostic Funding (**AIDF**) has two main objectives;

1. Improve diagnostic capability for more efficient and effective imaging services to reduce the diagnostic backlog ahead of Winter 2023.
2. In the long term, improve diagnostic services and waiting times for patients whilst reducing administrative burden on clinical staff.

The primary target for this funding stream is the Chest X-Ray (**CXR**) clinical pathway, given the proven case studies showing a reduction in referral to diagnosis waiting times. AIDF will provide the financial resource needed to explore the implementation and use of AI tools for modalities such as CXRs - the most common tool used to diagnose lung cancer.

Considering the touted results of AI applications in supporting the reduction of waiting times and enabling earlier diagnosis in other clinical pathways, the lung pathway could benefit from quicker turnaround times. With the recent guidance on diagnostic imaging turnaround times, the expectation is that providers will be enabled to meet national service delivery standards.

AI-supported diagnosis for lung cancer could enable earlier commencement of treatments for patients, possibly leading to better outcomes.



Credit: Cancer Research UK.

EMRAD INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

In-house AI Forum

AI Deployment Fund

Command Center

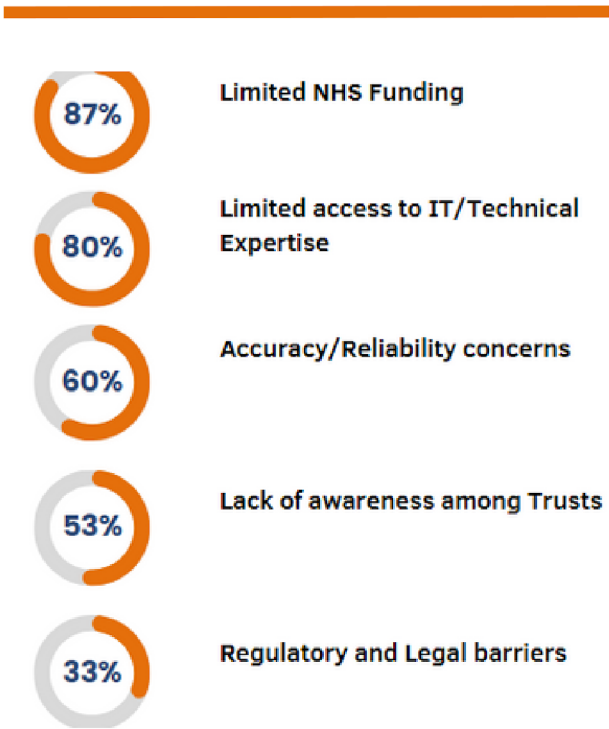
AI Centralised Platform

Patient Public Engagement

Call for Contributors

EMRAD Innovation Interest Group

There has been so much discourse on the several barriers that impede successful AI deployment in Trusts. Earlier this year, the Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) convened a stakeholder meeting on 'Overcoming the Barriers of Deploying AI' and innovators were surveyed to identify key barriers. The image below shows the ranking of their response to the question, 'What are the biggest barriers to adoption of AI imaging solutions in NHS?'



Based on the survey findings, funding ranked as the most significant barrier, and the AIDF aligns with the RCR's recommendation to provide ring-fenced funding for AI. It is equally a positive step that the AIDF acknowledges the significance of rolling out AI at a network level by mandating the submission of the AIDF bid through imaging networks.

While acknowledging that the AIDF is a step in addressing financing, a prominent barrier to AI deployment, there are still concerns about regulatory approval, access to PACS and IT teams given concurrent Trust priorities, and the need to prove the efficacy of the AI to enable the Trusts build a robust business case for sustainability in the future. In upcoming editions, we will delve into the technical, ethical, regulatory, and governance elements of deploying AI and other innovations in healthcare.

EMRAD INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

- **In-house AI Forum** - EMRAD is hosting its third AI Forum (**22nd September**) and on this occasion the invite is open to only staff in the 8 Trusts within our Imaging network. Please do not forget to register with the link sent to your inbox.
- **Command Center** - The Command Center platform designed to enable the optimisation of imaging scheduling and resources through real-time data visualisation is set to start data integration in September 2023.
- **AI Centralised Platform** - EMRAD and Thames Valley are the pilot sites working with the NHSE to test a new centralised cloud-based deployment for AI technologies.
- **Patient Public Engagement** - EMRAD is seeking to partner with dedicated individuals to ensure that patients' voices are heard and reflected in innovation design, development, and adoption.



- **Call for contributors** - We welcome contributions on imaging-focused innovation topics. If you have an idea for a feature article or opinion piece, contact @info.Emrad@nuh.nhs.uk with a brief description of the article/op-ed's focus.
- **EMRAD Innovation Interest Group** - If you are a member of staff within a Trust in the EMRAD Imaging network and would like to join our innovation interest group please drop us an email via @info.Emrad@nuh.nhs.uk to express your interest.