STM JOURNALS

Research and Reviews:
A Journal of Health Profession

E-ISSN: 2277-6192
P-ISSN: 2348-9537
Volume 15, Issue 3, 2025
September – December
DOI (Journal): 10.37591/RRJoHP

https://journals.stmjournals.com/rrjohp/

Research RRJOHP

AI in Mental Health: New Developments and Prospects

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionised numerous industries, including the mental health care sector.In order to clarify present trends, ethical issues, and future prospects in this ever-evolving subject, this paper examines the integration of AI into mental healthcare. Recent research, AI application examples, and ethical issues influencing the area were all included in this study. Research and development trends and regulatory frameworks were also examined.With applications including the early detection of mental health issues, individualised treatment programs, and AI-driven virtual therapists, current trends demonstrate AI's transformational potential. Ethical concerns about privacy, bias reduction, and maintaining the human element in therapy, however, accompany these developments. Future prospects place a strong emphasis on the necessity of transparent AI model validation, well-defined legal frameworks, and ongoing R&D. A potential area of healthcare is the integration of AI into mental health treatment and care. AI has the potential to revolutionise mental health care, but its use needs to be done in a responsible and moral manner. By addressing current problems and carefully deciding on future routes, we may effectively utilise AI's potential to enhance the ethics, efficacy, and accessibility of mental healthcare, benefiting both individuals and communities.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Mental Health, Teletherapy, Psychology, Diagnosis

INTRODUCTION

A major shift in healthcare is being brought about by the intersection of the domains of artificial intelligence (AI) and mental health [1]. The changing mental health paradigm serves as the background for this change. What used to be stigmatised and frequently disregarded is now acknowledged as an important aspect of general wellbeing. But this growing consciousness has also brought to light the scope of the global mental health epidemic. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), depression is the leading cause of disability globally, and mental health disorders now make up a sizable amount of the global sickness burden.

The insufficiencies of conventional methods of mental health care have been exposed by the extraordinary strain that the rise in the prevalence of mental health problems has placed on healthcare systems [2]. The growing need for freely accessible, reasonably priced, and readily expandable mental health treatments is not adequately met by the traditional strategy, which mostly depends on in-person consultations and therapies. The disparity between the demand and availability for mental health treatments highlights the pressing need for innovative solutions.

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Submission Date: May 27, 2025
Acceptance Date: December 21, 2025
Published Date: December 27, 2025

Citation: M. Vargina Aslam. AI in Mental Health: New Developments and Prospects. Research & Reviews: A Journal of Health Profession. 2025; 15(3): 1–7p.

The incorporation of AI is revolutionising mental health and wellness and transforming the field of mental healthcare. Even though this transition has the potential for widespread access, early intervention, and treatment personalisation, it also brings up ethical concerns, regulatory barriers, and the necessity for ongoing study and development [3]. A new era of mental healthcare could be ushered in by the combination of human expertise with AI skills, as the wide range of applications and ramifications of AI in this sector are further

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investigated. At almost 16 percent of the world's disease burden, the growing prevalence of mental health problems is nothing short of a pandemic. It is impossible to overestimate the need for effective remedies given that common mental illnesses like anxiety and depression cost the world economy over $1 trillion USD in lost productivity each year [4]. The pervasive stigma around mental health exacerbates the crisis by keeping many people from getting the care they require and perpetuating the cycle of suffering and neglect. However, the advent of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare has given rise to hope.

There is a real chance to change the mental health care landscape and lessen the effects of this worldwide pandemic by incorporating AI into mental health services. Our approach to mental wellness could be completely changed by AI's promise to improve early detection, offer individualised treatment options, and provide support through cutting-edge platforms, making care more widely available and less stigmatised. This narrative review reaches a pivotal point. It is crucial to evaluate the advancements made in the fields of AI and mental health as well as to foresee the potential and difficulties that lie ahead as the AI boom spreads throughout the world. This review attempts to highlight the importance of this fusion in tackling one of the most urgent health issues of our day by examining the advancements, opportunities, and potential drawbacks of incorporating AI into mental health care.

HISTORY OF AI IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE

When the computing era began to take shape in the middle of the 20th century, scientists started to imagine the possibility of robots mimicking cognitive processes, which paved the way for future developments in this area [5].

This is when the journey of AI's integration into mental healthcare began [5]. Their research established the fundamental ideas of symbolic AI, which subsequently proved useful in mental health situations for cognitive process simulation. Even though it was primitive by today's standards, this early AI research set the stage for a major convergence between psychology and AI [6].

He created a chatbot called ELIZA that mimicked a Rogerian psychotherapist. Even though ELIZA's answers were somewhat straightforward, they had the ability to initiate text-based discussions with users, offering an insight into how technology may facilitate interactions related to mental health. In order to simulate human competence, rule-based AI systems known as expert systems were first developed in the 1980s. The goal of these systems was to offer recommendations for diagnosis and treatment in a variety of psychological areas. Early AI systems were a major advancement in the fusion of technology and mental health, even though they had somewhat fewer capabilities than modern AI [7].

Computerised cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) programs first appeared in the late 20th century. The goal of these interactive software programs is to offer evidence-based treatment approaches for common mental health issues. Even though the early initiatives were not as sophisticated as the AI-powered treatments of today, they represented a shift towards the use of technology to improve mental health care accessible. AI's use in mental healthcare increased dramatically as computational power increased. Numerous facets of mental healthcare have been impacted by the development of AI in the twenty-first century, including teletherapy advancements, personalised treatment plans, virtual therapists, early detection of mental health issues, and ongoing monitoring [8].

These modern AI technologies have the ability to completely transform the mental health care industry by improving its efficacy, accessibility, and data-drivenness.

From early cognitive modelling to the sophisticated AI-driven interventions of today, the history of AI in mental healthcare is characterised by a number of evolutionary turning points. This voyage indicates a future where artificial intelligence (AI) plays a crucial role in treating the global mental health issue, reflecting the growing understanding of technology's capacity to assist and promote mental well-being. Specific AI tools utilised in modern mental healthcare are highlighted in Table 1.

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Table 1. AI tools used in current mental healthcare.

AI Tools	**Chatbot-based Therapy**
Woebot	Woebot is a chatbot that offers cognitive behavioural therapy for anxiety and despair. Clinical research have demonstrated its efficacy in mitigating symptoms of anxiety and sadness.
Wysa	Wysa is a chatbot that offers therapeutic assistance for a range of mental health issues, such as loneliness, stress, anxiety, and depression. It helps users enhance their mental health by combining positive psychology, mindfulness, and cognitive behavioural therapy.
Talkspace	Talkspace is an online therapy platform connecting patients with licensed therapists through video, text, and audio messaging. It uses AI to match patients with therapists best suited to their needs
BetterHelp	BetterHelp is an online therapy platform that connects patients with licensed therapists. It uses AI to match patients with therapists but offers a broader range of therapeutic approaches, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and psychodynamic therapy.
AI Tools	Emotional Health Apps
Moodfit	Moodfit is an app that tracks and analyses users' emotions and moods using artificial intelligence. It can assist users in recognising trends in their moods and creating emotional regulation techniques.
Happify	Happify is an app that helps people become more resilient and happy by using artificial intelligence. It provides a range of exercises, games, and activities aimed at enhancing users' resilience, happiness, and general well-being.
Headspace	The app Headspace provides mindfulness activities and guided meditation. Each user's meditation experience is customised using AI.
Calm	Calm is an app that provides mindfulness exercises and guided meditation. Other sleep-aid and relaxation functions, such ambient noises and sleep stories, are also available.
Shine	Shine is an app that offers daily support and inspiration tailored to each user. It gives tools and material that are customised for each user after using AI to learn about their requirements and interests.
DBT Coach	Dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) teaches people how to manage their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in a healthy way. DBT Coach is an app that gives users the tools and resources they need to practise DBT.
AI Tools	**Smart Mental Health Tools**
Kintsugi	Kintsugi helps therapists identify emotional distress early by using speech and face analysis to give them real-time emotional feedback.
IBM's Watson Health	IBM's Watson Health employs AI to predict disease progression and treatment outcomes by analyzing comprehensive patient data.
Cerebral	Cerebral uses artificial intelligence (AI) to help therapists improve individualised treatment programs for patients with mental health issues.
Mindstrong Health	In order to give therapists insight into patients' emotional states during teletherapy, Mindstrong Health uses artificial intelligence (AI) to analyse smartphone keyboard interactions.
Smart Watch	AI-enabled smartwatches track variations in heart rate, physical activity, and sleep habits, providing useful information for tracking mental health.
Pear Therapeutics' reset	The FDA-approved prescription digital therapy reSET from Pear Therapeutics monitors patient progress and engagement, allowing for data-driven treatment modifications.

ROLE OF AI IN DIAGNOSIS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a valuable instrument for mental health disorder prediction and early identification.Whether it is used to analyse speech, text, facial expressions, or electronic health records, these technologies are revolutionising the diagnosis and treatment of mental health. With the help of predictive models, AI improves early intervention, customises treatment plans, and enhances mental health overall. Figure 1 illustrates the use of AI in mental health diagnosis.

EARLY DETECTION OF MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER

AI-driven methods for analysing voice, text, and facial expressions have made considerable strides in identifying early signs of mental health disorders. Natural language processing (NLP) techniques enable the extraction of valuable information from written or spoken language. Sentiment analysis, for

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example, can identify small changes in an individual's emotional state by examining written diaries, chat logs, or social media posts.

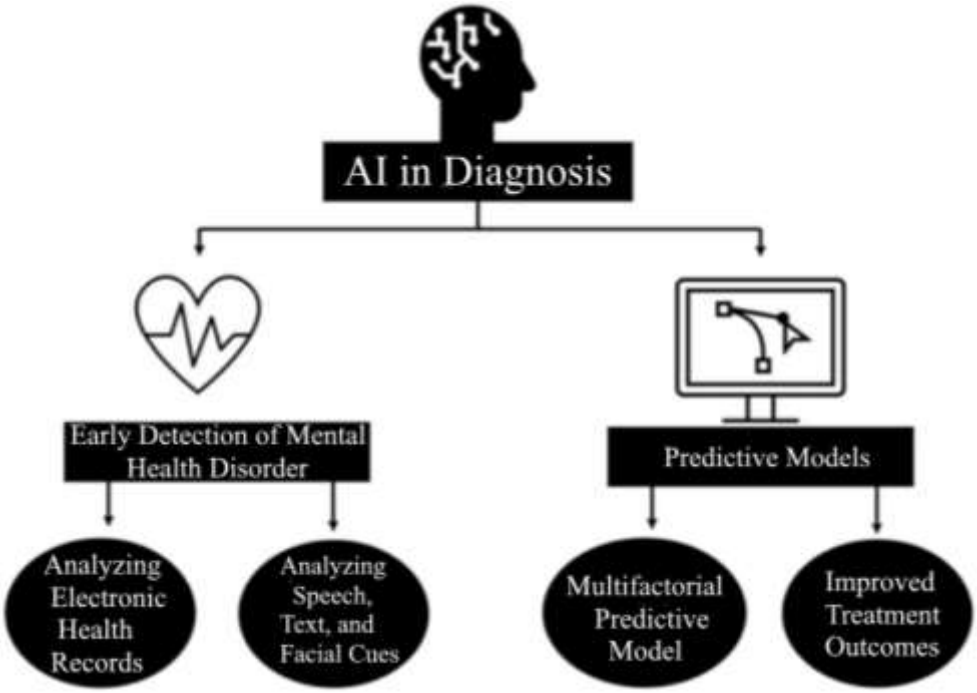


Figure 1. Application of AI in mental health diagnosis.

Additionally, voice analysis can identify changes in speech patterns, such as changes in tone, rhythm, and pitch, which may be signs of anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues [9]. When used in conjunction with computer vision, facial expression analysis can provide information about a person's emotional state.Through smartphone apps or video chats, this technology facilitates remote mental health monitoring. In this field, the current trend is the development of AI systems that can recognise and understand these tiny signs with remarkable accuracy [10]. As artificial intelligence (AI) systems advance, they may be able to identify mental health issues early and enable prompt treatment. Sentiment analysis is used by the AI-powered mental health app "Woebot" to examine user-provided text.

When a user frequently displays signs of depression, hopelessness, or despair during chat conversations, Woebot detects these trends and provides advice or suggests seeking professional assistance. During therapy sessions, "Cogito," an AI platform utilised in telehealth services, tracks changes in the speech patterns of patients. Cogito warns the therapist to address emotional cues throughout the session if there are changes in tone, rhythm, or pitch that might be signs of anxiety or sadness. An additional useful tool for early detection is facial expression analysis [11]. "Affectiva," a leader in emotion AI, has created tools for analysing face expressions. Numerous research on mental health have used these instruments.

Additionally, AI has demonstrated promise in the analysis of electronic health records (EHRs) to help with early mental health condition diagnosis. Large amounts of patient data, such as clinical notes, diagnostic tests, and medical histories, can be sorted through by machine learning algorithms to find patterns that may point to a mental health issue. By identifying patients who may be at danger, these algorithms can make sure that medical professionals give their mental health more consideration when providing routine care. AI can also make it easier to incorporate mental health information into a patient's general health profile, allowing for a more comprehensive approach to treatment. Because personalised medicine takes into account each person's particular medical history, genetics, and lifestyle, it helps with early detection.

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One excellent example is the "Google Depression Screening Tool". The program asks users to fill out the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), a professionally validated questionnaire, when they search for terms related to depression on Google [12]. It offers advice on how to get expert assistance if needed, based on the user's answers. The potential reach of mental health assessments is greatly expanded by this integration into one of the most popular search engines in the world.

AI IN TREATMENT

With the emergence of chatbots and virtual therapists as well as personalised interventions, AI is changing the face of mental health care. These patterns represent a significant change towards mental health care that may be more scalable, accessible, and successful. The use of AI in mental health care is demonstrated in Figure 2.

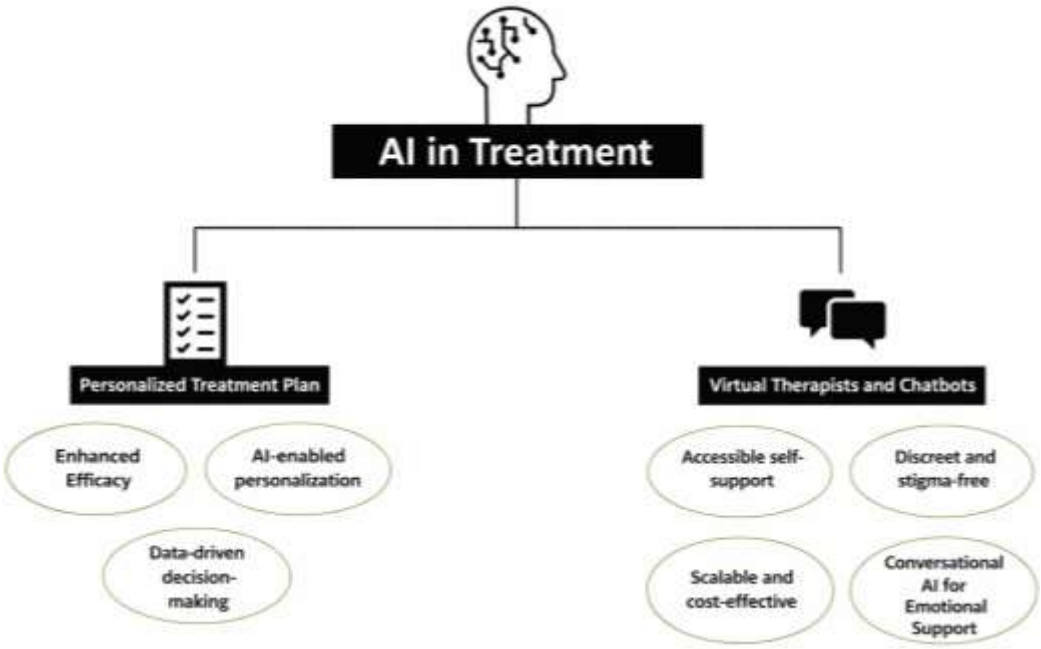


Figure 2. Applications of AI in mental health treatment.

Personalized Treatement Plans

A significant movement towards individualised therapies has been brought about by the integration of AI into mental health care. AI systems can examine each person's distinct demands and traits thanks to large datasets and machine learning skills. This comprises behavioural patterns, historical treatment outcomes, genetic predispositions, and current physiological data [13]. AI can now create treatment regimens with unparalleled customisation thanks to this thorough research, guaranteeing that patients receive the right interventions. AI can anticipate how a patient would react to different antidepressant drugs by analysing their genetic composition. For instance, a patient may be more likely to benefit from a certain type of antidepressants if they have a particular genetic profile. Individualised treatment programs can reduce the negative effects of ineffective drugs and greatly increase the likelihood of recovery.

Personalised treatment plans may have a major effect on the effectiveness of therapy. Treatments for mental health issues have historically taken a one-size-fits-all approach, which occasionally produces less than ideal results [14]. Therapists may create interventions that are precisely tailored to each person's unique issues and abilities because to AI-driven personalisation. Shorter recuperation periods, better patient satisfaction, and more effective therapies result from this. AI is capable of continuously monitoring and analysing a patient's behavioural patterns, including triggers, stressors, and substance use, in the context of addiction therapy. AI can recognise high-risk scenarios and instantly notify

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patients and therapists of possible relapse concerns. Timely interventions and treatment strategy modifications are made possible by this proactive approach.

AI plays a crucial role in directing therapeutic choices at every stage of the process [15]. Real-time treatment plan adjustments are made by algorithms that continually assess patient development in light of changing demands and responses. By reducing the trial-and-error that is frequently involved in mental health therapies, this dynamic method maximises the likelihood of success and optimises the therapeutic process. Based on the patient's development and distinct cognitive processes, AI-driven algorithms can modify CBT interventions. The AI might successfully modify the therapy method to address a patient's perfectionist inclinations, for example. This customised method increases CBT's efficacy for various people [16].

Virtual Therapists and Chatbots

One notable development in improving the accessibility of mental health resources is the use of chatbots driven by AI and virtual therapists. These online resources offer 24/7 assistance to people with mental health issues, regardless of time or location restrictions [17]. AI-powered chatbots are being used by crisis hotlines to offer people in distress instant assistance. When needed, these chatbots may connect users with human therapists or crisis hotlines, have sympathetic chats, and provide coping mechanisms. A chatbot used by Crisis Text Line, for example, has managed millions of chats and offered assistance in times of need.

Chatbots and virtual therapists offer a private, stigma-free way for people to get mental health support. Because mental health is viewed as stigmatised, many people are reluctant to seek in-person therapy. This issue is addressed by AI-driven solutions, which lower barriers to care by enabling users to get support in the comfort of their own homes. In addition to offering evidence-based therapy including cognitive-behavioral approaches, these virtual therapists converse with consumers via text. These tools are easily and discreetly accessible to users, encouraging consistent self-care.

Chatbots and AI-powered virtual therapists provide scalable answers to the rising need for mental health assistance [18]. These digital entities provide affordable substitutes for conventional therapy since they can communicate with several users at once. When it comes to solving the scarcity of mental health specialists, this scalability is very important. For instance, AI-powered virtual therapists can now provide therapy to kids with autism spectrum disease.By analysing a child's facial expressions, these virtual therapists modify their interactions based on facial recognition technology. In a safe and encouraging setting, they can impart social skills and emotional awareness. These can have therapeutic and sympathetic conversations thanks to the advanced conversational AI algorithms. These chatbots are capable of cognitive-behavioral therapy, emotional support, and active listening.

CONCLUSION

The problems and potential paths in AI for mental health treatment are complex and ever-changing. To fully realise AI's promise in enhancing mental healthcare, it is imperative to engage in ongoing research and development, ensure model validation and transparency, and establish strong regulatory frameworks. These initiatives will be crucial in determining how mental health therapy develops in the future, making it more ethical, accessible, and useful for people as AI technologies advance [19].

It is essential that AI models deployed in therapeutic contexts be transparent and validated. Thorough testing and validation procedures are required to guarantee the accuracy, dependability, and patient safety of AI-driven therapies. AI models that have been validated and put through rigorous clinical trials are becoming more and more popular. These models have proven to be effective in enhancing mental health outcomes and are founded on evidence-based techniques. A developing trend is the creation of interpretable AI algorithms that can explain their suggestions [20]. This encourages openness and makes it easier for patients and doctors to comprehend the logic underlying AI-generated insights and judgements.

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