Q&A INTERVIEW WITH

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What are the top three factors shaping the healthcare industry?
The healthcare sector is facing challenges under increased pressure from escalating costs, shifting demographics and growing demand. It forces us to rethink the way we work within the health care sector, and we must be more proactive rather than reactive. We must direct our efforts towards sustaining health rather than delivering treatment.

The collection and use of data are growing significantly, and we have not seen the peak of that growth yet. Especially the use of data collected by the citizens themselves is an important trend, and it's going to be exciting to incorporate it into the dialog and planning with the patient. This also means that citizens will have a much more central role in their own treatment.

The growth of new digital solutions is another important factor in shaping the healthcare industry in the coming years. We see it optimizing the ways we run a hospital, but the important changes are coming when we look at how robots and artificial intelligence alike are going to change the way we deliver the services of a hospital to the patients. Robots are gaining ground in the logistical and surgical fields, while we are seeing a strong rise in artificial intelligence solutions in decision support systems for the clinical staff, where several pilot projects are showing promising outcomes.

What key benefits will technologies such as AI, machine learning and IoT, bring to the health sector in 2019?
AI will lead to a shift in paradigm, and the waves are starting to roll now. AI is bringing a lot to the table, but I'm not sure the short-term discussion of 2019 is that interesting. AI is bringing big changes with it, and changes take time.

The right data, algorithms and computing power can change and evolve every part of a patient's interaction with the healthcare sector. From risk stratification and early detection and prevention work to faster and more precise diagnostics, optimized treatment options and so on. AI will make the healthcare sector better, the quality of our work will be better, and everyone will benefit.

How is your company keeping up with the new wave of technological innovation?
The development of new technologies moves fast, and it can be incredibly difficult to find the time and resources to keep up. We interact a lot with both universities, startups and, trade and business associations, and we try to promote both startups and developed solutions to our main challenges.

One of the more exciting and new initiatives in Denmark is something called AI Signature Projects. In a collaboration between the state and the regional level we are funding several small but agile AI projects and pilots over the coming years. The AI Signature Projects will have the freedom and funding to test out their ideas on new uses for artificial intelligence in the healthcare sector, identify road bumps and challenge the way we normally do things. A selected group of stakeholders will follow the projects, help along the way, gather the learnings and use it to move the field of AI in the public sector further on.

What is the biggest challenge the health sector is facing at the moment?
The biggest challenges every health care sector is facing is the rising number of elderly citizens as we live longer and the demographic is shifting. It also means that there are fewer people to provide the care for the many, that the number of multi-sick people is increasing, that the expenses are rising, and so on.

What are your predictions for the industry for the next 10-12 months?
AI is continuing the growth within the healthcare industry, and the ethics of using and developing AI will be a central part of the discussion.

Data and the way we work with it will be of increasing importance. In Denmark, we have a strict legal limitation on what we can do and how we do it.

Another big challenge is cybersecurity. As digital solutions become increasingly important within our healthcare sector, safe and secure conditions also include strong cyber and information security. The Danish healthcare sector is very digitalized and that only makes this topic even more urgent.

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