Health technology in perspective

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The ongoing development of information and communication technology (ICT) is taking the healthcare industry to the next level. It allows an independent healthcare system by which anyone can easily obtain the real-time measurement of individual biometrics as well as customized prescriptions without the hassle to visit health professionals in person.

Google, a corporate giant of the ICT industry, has been cooperating with a leading pharmaceutical company, Novartis, on the Smart Lens, which gives LED alerts when the measured serum glucose level acquired from tear drops is excessive. This product will enable diabetic patients to reduce the inconvenience of countless blood samplings. The ingestible sensor is currently limited to integration with inactive pharmaceuticals taken alongside medication, but in the near future, the function of the ingestible sensor will be widened in range by integration with active pills for targeted areas of the body. Silicon Valley-based Proteus Digital Health has conducted clinical trials in this therapeutic area.

Experts predict that 80% of medical data in hospitals will soon be obtained using wearable devices. Lux Research, an independent research and advisory firm, also anticipates the size of the digital healthcare industry will rise more than eightfold from \$5.1 billion in 2013 to \$41.8 billion by 2023.

ICT has transformed the existing concept of hospital-centered healthcare to individual-centered care. This trend is evidenced by the international conference Health 2.0. In 2007, a few medical and ICT industry bloggers launched this conference, which now has become a prestigious international event where professionals from global ICT corporations as well as insurance and health companies attend.

This year's Health 2.0 Conference will be held in Seoul on April 14–15, sponsored by the South Korean government, with a theme of health and wellness ICT. Considering the ultimate goal of dentistry, we should take a close look at the agenda of this upcoming event. It includes 'The happiness of the ICT platform', 'Developing a senior's health and wellness index', and 'Four dimensions of health & wellness ICT services with innovative technology', which are all essential issues in dentistry.

We must continue to integrate ICT with dental science, following the latest trends in ICT for health care.

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