Cameron Tudor, MSKPN Board Director and Managing Director of West London Physiotherapy, gives his thoughts on the latest AI developments in the world of MSK and how MSKPN members can get involved.

G'day AI - How our MSKPN community is getting on board with Artificial Intelligence

Earlier this year, I became a MSKPN Board Director and one thing that really stood out to me was how many of our members are curious about AI. That enthusiasm has now sparked the creation of our very own AI working group.

But what do we mean by AI?
AI – artificial intelligence – isn't one single thing. The old example is the calculator: brilliant at maths, but only for one narrow task. What's different now is generative AI – tools that don't just follow instructions but can generate new ideas, ask their own questions, summarise complex information, and provide fresh information in return.

Threat or opportunity - Should we be worried?
There's no avoiding it: AI will change jobs. Some tasks will disappear, but others will evolve, and new opportunities will emerge.

In private MSK practice, I don't see AI replacing us. But I do see us having to double down on the human elements; touch, empathy, rapport building, and a human plan.

The NHS, however, may see more disruption. Services are expensive to run, and AI that can triage, give advice, and manage straightforward conditions could reduce demand on clinicians. The concern is that reduced demand leads to reduced numbers of roles. Flok's AI clinic in Cambridge, which cut waiting lists for back pain via an AI app, is a good example.

I'm optimistic about AI
AI should free us to focus on the parts of our work that machines can't replicate: empathy, touch, connection, reassurance.

On the admin side I've also told my front-of-house team the same thing: You won't be replaced. A genuine human welcome lowers anxiety, boosts mood, and builds trust. That first impression is a critical part of patient care – no algorithm can deliver it.

How I use AI
At West London Physiotherapy, we use **Heidi**, an AI medical scribe. It listens to consultations, creates a draft medical record, and we review and sign it off. **It saves us around an hour a day.**

Patient consent and data security are non-negotiable. And while AI is useful, it still makes mistakes – "hallucinations" as they're called. It can help with common conditions, but anything serious or requiring a physical examination still needs a clinician.

The Future of AI
No one can afford to bury their head in the sand when it comes to AI. It is transforming the world around us. The big question isn't *if* it will change things, but *how far it will go*. Eventually, we may see fully robotic care – a robot therapist that scans your body and treats you. But technology and cost mean that's still (hopefully) decades away. But it's coming.

In the meantime, tools like ChatGPT are evolving into personal concierges and mentors. You might say, *"I've got a sore shoulder what should I do?"* and it'll respond, *"Tell me more, when did it start?"* It'll guide you through things step by step.

And as a business owner, I use it. I've asked AI to review tenancy agreements and analyse business performance from an annual report. It's like having a tireless, insightful assistant who never sleeps, always ready with a fresh perspective.

What is MSKPN doing about AI
We've created an AI sub group and I'm speaking to people in the industry, monitoring what's developing as it's changing so fast. The plan is to keep members informed, raising awareness, have communication with other stakeholders, separate hype from reality, spot opportunities, give ideas for tools or workflows that improve care and efficiency, flag risks and make sure physio voices are heard in AI adoption and policy within healthcare.

We encourage you at the very least, to join our webinars. You could be left behind unless you embrace it.

Next steps
Join us for our two MSKPN member webinars on AI:

15 Oct - AI webinar part 1 - Operational
- Speaker Dr Harvinder Power - Co-Founder & CEO at Motics
- A showcase of practical examples, best practice and guidance on how AI developments are shaping areas like records, diagnostics and admin within MSK and beyond.

26 Nov – AI Webinar part 2 – AI working group discussion
- Join Cam and Simon Gilchrist to help shape our group

Not a member of MSKPN? Drop us a line to sign up for membership and join the debate enquiries@mskpn.co.uk

https://www.mskpn.co.uk/our-members/