

Watson, Cognitive Computing and Healthcare

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We have solid ideas about the flawed state of healthcare, the critical need for change and the future we want. Improving health outcomes while controlling costs and personalizing healthcare are among the objectives. It is clear that enabling the transformation of healthcare will require making better decisions. At the same time we are dealing with huge and expanding volumes of data. We will need tools to help us gather and analyze data to bring relevant information to decision makers so that it is easier to obtain evidence-supported choices. Unstructured, text-like content is a large fraction of the data we rely on for decisions. Up until recently we have had limited ability to use unstructured material effectively. IBM's Watson, with its ability to understand the nature of a question being addressed and to read and understand huge volumes of literature, makes such material more approachable. However, making medicine more precise mandates the use of other forms of data, and population observational techniques. Predictive analytics, to identify people that need specific attention, and comparative analytics to elicit evidence from populations that can be applied to individuals, are part of the process. IBM has developed robust resources that provide such information.