



Revolutionizing Mental Health with AI: Opportunities, Challenges and Future

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerges as a transformative tool in mental health care, offering innovative approaches to early detection, diagnosis, and intervention. AI-powered technologies, including machine learning models, natural language processing (NLP), and chatbots, are being utilized to analyze behavioural patterns, speech, and physiological data to assess mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These AI-driven systems enhance accessibility to mental health care by providing scalable, cost-effective, and personalized therapeutic support through mobile applications and virtual assistants. Despite its potential, the integration of AI in mental health presents challenges, including ethical concerns, data privacy risks, algorithmic biases, and the lack of human empathy in automated interventions. Ensuring responsible AI deployment requires robust regulatory frameworks, transparent algorithms, and continuous human oversight. While AI cannot replace human mental health professionals, it can serve as a valuable complement, improving early intervention strategies and expanding access to care for underserved populations. This paper explores the current opportunities, challenges, and future directions of AI in mental health care, emphasizing the need for ethical AI development to maximize its effectiveness while mitigating risks.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, mental health, depression, anxiety, algorithms, chatbots.

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing mental health care by offering innovative tools for diagnosis, treatment, and support. AI-powered systems, such as chatbots, predictive analytics, and machine learning algorithms, are being used to enhance accessibility, personalize treatment, and improve early detection of mental health disorders¹.

With the increasing prevalence of mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, and PTSD, AI provides scalable solutions to bridge gaps in traditional mental health services. AI-driven applications, such as conversational agents and mobile health apps, offer 24/7 support, while machine learning models analyze speech patterns, social media activity, and biometric data to detect early signs of distress².

Despite its potential, AI in mental health faces challenges, including ethical concerns, data privacy issues, and the lack of human empathy in AI-driven interactions. However, with continued advancements and ethical AI development, it has the potential to complement traditional therapy, making mental health care more efficient and accessible³.

What is Mental Health⁴?

Mental Health refers to a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how individuals think, feel, and behave, as well as how they handle stress, relate to others, and make decisions. Good

mental health enables people to cope with daily challenges, work productively, and contribute to their communities⁴.

KEY ASPECTS OF MENTAL HEALTH⁵⁻⁸

Emotional well-being: It refers to the ability to manage emotions effectively, maintain a positive outlook, and cope with life's challenges in a healthy way. It is a key aspect of **mental health** and influences how people handle stress, build relationships, and make decisions. The ability to manage emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, and stress in a healthy way⁵.

Cognitive functioning: It refers to the mental processes involved in acquiring knowledge, understanding, and responding to information. It includes abilities such as **thinking, learning, memory, problem-solving, decision-making, and attention**. Cognitive functions are essential for daily activities, work performance, and overall quality of life⁵.

Behavioural health: It refers to the connection between a person's habits, behaviours, and overall well-being—including mental health, emotional health, and substance use. It involves how behaviours impact physical and mental health, as well as how individuals cope with stress, make choices, and interact with others. Engaging in positive behaviours that support well-being, such as self-care and healthy relationships⁶.

Resilience: It is the ability to **adapt, recover, and grow** in the face of adversity, stress, or challenges. It helps individuals bounce back from difficult experiences,



maintain mental and emotional well-being, and continue moving forward despite setbacks⁷.

FACTORS AFFECTING MENTAL HEALTH⁸

Biological factors: Play a significant role in mental health by influencing **brain function, mood regulation, and overall psychological well-being**. These factors are often **genetic, neurological, or physiological**, and they can increase the risk of developing mental health conditions.

Life experiences: It plays a significant role in shaping mental health. Positive experiences can build resilience and emotional well-being, while negative or traumatic experiences can increase the risk of mental health disorders like anxiety, depression, PTSD, and more.

Social environment: Refers to the surroundings, relationships, and cultural factors that influence a person's thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. A supportive social environment fosters mental well-being, while a negative or toxic social environment can contribute to stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues.

Lifestyle choices: Lifestyle choices play a crucial role in maintaining mental well-being. Daily habits related to diet, exercise, sleep, substance use, and stress management can either improve or negatively affect mental health. A healthy lifestyle promotes emotional stability, resilience, and cognitive function, while unhealthy habits can increase the risk of mental health disorders like anxiety, depression, and stress-related illnesses.

COMMON MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS⁹

Depression: It is a **serious mental health disorder** that affects a person's mood, thoughts, and behaviour. It goes beyond normal sadness and can lead to **persistent feelings of hopelessness, loss of interest, and emotional distress**. Depression can interfere with daily activities, work, relationships, and physical health if left untreated.

Anxiety disorders: **Mental health conditions** characterized by **excessive fear, worry, or nervousness** that interfere with daily life. While occasional anxiety is normal, **persistent and overwhelming anxiety** can become debilitating.

Bipolar Disorder: It is a **mental health condition** that causes extreme **mood swings** between **emotional highs (mania or hypomania)** and **lows (depression)**. These mood shifts can affect a person's **energy, behaviour, and ability to function** in daily life.

Schizophrenia: Refers to **chronic and severe mental disorder** that affects a person's **thinking, emotions, behaviour, and perception of reality**. It often involves **hallucinations, delusions, disorganized speech, and cognitive impairment**. Schizophrenia significantly impacts daily functioning and requires lifelong management.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): It is a **mental health condition** that develops after experiencing or witnessing a **traumatic event**. It is characterized by

persistent distressing thoughts, flashbacks, nightmares, and emotional numbness that interfere with daily life.

CURRENT APPLICATIONS OF AI IN MENTAL HEALTH⁹

AI is playing a crucial role in transforming mental health care by improving accessibility, early diagnosis, and personalized treatment. Below are some of the key applications of AI in mental health today:

1. AI-POWERED CHATBOTS & VIRTUAL THERAPISTS¹⁰

AI-powered chatbots and virtual therapists are transforming mental health care by providing accessible, affordable, and personalized support. These technologies use artificial intelligence (AI), natural language processing (NLP), and machine learning (ML) to assist individuals with mental health concerns.

How AI Chatbots & Virtual Therapists Work¹¹

- ✓ Natural Language Processing (NLP) – Enables chatbots to understand and respond to human conversations.
- ✓ Machine Learning (ML) – Helps chatbots improve over time by learning from user interactions. Sentiment Analysis – Detects emotions and tailors responses accordingly.
- ✓ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Algorithms – Provides evidence-based therapy techniques.

Key Benefits of AI Chatbots & Virtual Therapists¹²

24/7 Availability: Users can access mental health support anytime, anywhere. No need to wait for an appointment with a human therapist.

Affordability: AI chatbots are cost-effective compared to traditional therapy. Some apps offer free or low-cost services.

Anonymity & Privacy: Users can discuss personal issues without fear of judgment. Helps reduce stigma around seeking mental health support.

Immediate Crisis Support: AI chatbots can detect distress signals and provide immediate coping strategies. Some chatbots can connect users to emergency help lines if needed.

Personalized Mental Health Support: Chatbots track user mood, stress levels, and progress over time. Offers customized therapy exercises and relaxation techniques.

Popular AI Chatbots & Virtual Therapists

Woebot: Uses CBT techniques to help users manage stress, anxiety, and depression. Engages in conversational support based on research-backed methods.

Wysa: AI-powered chatbot with CBT, DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy), and mindfulness techniques. Offers guided self-help exercises and meditation sessions.



Replika: Provides emotional companionship and support. Uses AI to create a personalized conversational experience.

Youper: AI-driven emotional health assistant. Helps users understand and manage their emotions through mood tracking and AI-driven conversations.

Limitations & Challenges of AI Chatbots¹³

Lack of Human Connection: AI cannot fully replace human empathy and emotional intelligence. Some users prefer face-to-face interactions with a therapist.

Limited Crisis Intervention: AI chatbots cannot replace emergency mental health services. In severe cases, human professionals are needed for intervention.

Data Privacy Concerns: Users must be cautious about sharing sensitive personal information. Ensuring secure encryption and data protection is crucial.

2. Early Detection and Diagnosis¹⁴

Examples: AI models analyzing social media posts, speech, and facial expressions

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming mental health care by analyzing social media posts, speech patterns, and facial expressions to detect emotional distress, mental health conditions, and behavioural changes. These AI models use machine learning (ML), natural language processing (NLP), and computer vision to identify early signs of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and other disorders.

AI Analysis of Social Media Posts

How It Works

- ✓ Natural Language Processing (NLP) scans text for emotional cues.
- ✓ Sentiment analysis detects mood shifts, negativity, or suicidal ideation.
- ✓ Behavioural tracking identifies changes in posting frequency and engagement.

Key Indicators AI Detects

- ✓ Depressive language – Repeated use of words like “hopeless,” “alone,” or “worthless.”
- ✓ Social withdrawal – Reduced online activity or sudden silence.
- ✓ Suicidal ideation – Phrases suggesting self-harm or death-related thoughts.
- ✓ Extreme mood swings – Rapid shifts in tone, from excitement to despair.

Example applications

- ✓ Facebook & Instagram AI – Flags posts suggesting self-harm and alerts crisis help lines.
- ✓ Reddit & Twitter Sentiment Analysis – AI tracks emotional trends in public discussions.

- ✓ Google’s AI Research – Studies online behaviour to predict mental health risks.

AI-Powered Speech Analysis¹⁵

How It Works

- ✓ Voice tone analysis – Detects stress, anxiety, and emotional distress.
- ✓ Speech pattern recognition – Identifies slow or monotone speech (depression) or rapid, pressured speech (bipolar disorder).
- ✓ Linguistic markers – Analyzes word choice, pauses, and hesitation.

Key Indicators AI Detects

- ✓ Low energy or monotone voice – Possible sign of depression.
- ✓ Fast, erratic speech – May indicate mania or anxiety.
- ✓ Frequent pauses or stuttering – Could be linked to stress or PTSD.
- ✓ Incoherent speech – Possible symptom of schizophrenia.

Example applications

Cogito AI – Used by call centers to detect emotional distress in employees.

Ellipsis Health – Uses voice biomarkers to assess mental health.

Amazon & Google AI – Developing voice recognition models for emotional health tracking.

3. Personalized Treatment Plans¹⁶

Examples: AI-driven mental health apps (Youper, Mindstrong)

Personalized treatment plans in mental health use AI, big data, and precision medicine to create customized care strategies for individuals. Unlike traditional one-size-fits-all approaches, personalized plans consider a person's genetics, lifestyle, medical history, and psychological profile to offer targeted and effective treatment.

Key Components of Personalized Mental Health Treatment

AI & Machine Learning in Diagnosis

AI analyzes speech, text, facial expressions, and wearable data to assess mental health. Predictive analytics help detect early warning signs of mental health disorders. AI-powered decision support systems assist therapists in making informed choices.

Genetic & Biomarker Testing

Pharmacogenomics studies how genes affect an individual's response to medication.



Helps determine the most effective drugs with minimal side effects. Identifies biological markers linked to depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.

Digital Mental Health Tools

Mental health apps track mood, behaviour, and sleep patterns. AI-based chatbots provide real-time emotional support. Wearable devices monitor heart rate, stress levels, and physical activity.

Personalized Therapy Approaches

AI tailors Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBI) to individual needs. Virtual therapists adjust treatment based on real-time feedback.

Blended therapy combines human therapists with AI support.

Lifestyle & Behavioural Insights

AI analyzes diet, sleep, and exercise patterns to suggest behavioural changes.

Identifies triggers and stressors through daily activity tracking.

Encourages healthy habits based on individual preferences and routines.

Benefits of Personalized Treatment Plans

- ✓ Higher Treatment Success Rates- Tailored treatments increase effectiveness.
- ✓ Reduced Side Effects- Personalized medication minimizes adverse reactions.
- ✓ Early Intervention & Prevention- AI detects mental health issues before they worsen.
- ✓ Improved Patient Engagement- Custom plans keep individuals motivated and involved.
- ✓ More Efficient Use of Resources - Reduces trial-and-error in therapy and medication.

4. AI in Psychiatry & Clinical Decision Support¹⁷

Examples: IBM Watson Health, Cognoa

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming psychiatry and clinical decision-making by improving diagnosis, treatment planning, and patient monitoring. AI-powered tools analyze vast amounts of data, identify patterns, and assist mental health professionals in making more accurate and personalized decisions.

AI in Psychiatric Diagnosis

Natural Language Processing (NLP)- Analyzes speech, text, and patient records to detect mental health conditions.

Machine Learning (ML) Algorithms- Identify patterns in patient data to diagnose depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder.

Neuroimaging Analysis- AI interprets MRI and EEG scans to detect structural and functional brain abnormalities.

Example applications

IBM Watson Health – Uses AI to assist doctors in diagnosing mental health conditions.

Mind Strong Health – Tracks smartphone usage patterns to detect early signs of mental disorders.

Taru Health AI – Assesses **speech and facial expressions** to diagnose depression.

5. Remote Mental Health Monitoring¹⁷

Remote mental health monitoring uses AI, wearable technology, mobile apps, and telehealth to track patients' mental well-being outside traditional clinical settings. This approach enables early intervention, personalized care, and continuous monitoring of mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and PTSD.

AI-Powered Mental Health Apps

- ✓ Track mood, emotions, and behaviours over time
- ✓ Use Natural Language Processing (NLP) to analyze texts and voice for emotional cues.
- ✓ Provide real-time mental health support and therapy recommendations.

Examples:

Woebot – AI chatbot for cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).

Wysa – AI-driven emotional support chatbot.

Mindstrong – Tracks smartphone behavior to assess mental health.

6. AI for Cognitive and Neurological Disorders

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the diagnosis, treatment, and management of **cognitive and neurological disorders** such as **Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis (MS), and stroke**. AI-powered tools leverage **machine learning (ML), deep learning, and neuroimaging** to provide **early detection, personalized treatments, and continuous monitoring** of these conditions.

Examples: AI applications in detecting Alzheimer's, schizophrenia, and autism.

AI-Powered Neuroimaging Analysis

- ✓ AI enhances MRI, CT scans, and PET scans to detect early signs of brain disorders.
- ✓ Deep learning models identify structural and functional abnormalities in the brain.
- ✓ Used for diagnosing Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, brain tumors, and stroke.

Examples:

Google Deep Mind – AI detects brain injuries from MRI scans.



IBM Watson Health – AI analyzes neuroimaging for dementia diagnosis.

Viz.ai – AI detects strokes in real time from CT scans.

7. Virtual Reality (VR) and AI in Mental Health Therapy¹⁷

Examples: Limbix, Oxford VR

The combination of Virtual Reality (VR) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming mental health therapy by creating immersive, data-driven, and personalized treatments. VR allows patients to experience realistic simulations in a controlled environment, while AI enhances therapy by analyzing emotions, tracking progress, and customizing treatments. This integration is particularly effective for treating PTSD, anxiety, depression, phobias, and schizophrenia.

VR & AI in Mental Health Therapy

- ✓ AI-Driven Emotion Recognition in VR – Real-time tracking of facial expressions and voice.
- ✓ VR-Based Group Therapy – AI-powered social interactions in virtual spaces.
Neural Integration – Brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) for direct brain-VR interaction.
- ✓ AI & VR for Early Mental Health Screening – Detecting disorders before severe symptoms appear.

CHALLENGES OF AI IN MENTAL HEALTH¹⁸⁻²¹

While AI has the potential to revolutionize mental health care, it also faces several challenges:

Lack of Human Empathy

AI lacks the emotional intelligence and human connection that therapists provide, which is crucial for effective mental health treatment.

Data Privacy and Security Risks

Mental health data is highly sensitive. AI applications must comply with regulations like HIPAA and GDPR, but breaches or misuse of data remain a concern.

Bias in AI Models

AI models may inherit biases from training data, leading to inaccurate or discriminatory diagnoses and recommendations, particularly for underrepresented groups.

Ethical and Legal Issues

There is limited regulation and oversight on AI-driven mental health tools, raising concerns about accountability and misuse.

Reliability and Accuracy Concerns

AI models may generate false positives or false negatives in diagnosing mental health conditions, leading to inappropriate treatment recommendations.

Limited Explain ability (Black Box Problem)

Many AI models function as "black boxes," meaning their decision-making processes are not transparent, making it difficult for clinicians to validate AI-driven diagnoses.

Over-Reliance on AI and Reduction of Human Interaction

Increased dependence on AI could lead to reduced access to human therapists, potentially worsening care for patients who require a personal touch.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF AI IN MENTAL HEALTH

As AI technology continues to evolve, its role in mental health care is expected to expand significantly. Future advancements will focus on improving accuracy, personalization, accessibility, and ethical considerations. Below are key areas where AI is likely to make a significant impact:

More Advanced AI-Powered Chatbots & Virtual Therapists²²

Future AI chatbots will have improved emotional intelligence, enabling more human-like conversations. Multimodal AI (analyzing text, voice, and facial expressions) will provide more accurate emotional assessments. AI-driven real-time crisis intervention systems could better detect and respond to suicide risks.

AI for Early Diagnosis and Predictive Mental Health Models²²

AI will integrate genetic, neuroimaging, and behavioural data to detect mental disorders before symptoms fully develop. Advanced AI models will provide personalized risk assessments for conditions like depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder. Predictive analytics will help healthcare providers intervene earlier, preventing severe mental health crises.

AI-Powered Personalized Treatment Plans²³

AI will tailor treatments based on a combination of biological, psychological, and environmental factors. AI-driven therapy customization will match patients with the most effective interventions, whether medication, therapy type, or lifestyle changes. Integration with wearable health devices will allow continuous tracking of patient mental health and real-time adjustments to treatment.

AI & Virtual Reality (VR) for Immersive Mental Health Therapy²³

AI-driven VR therapy will offer personalized exposure therapy for PTSD, phobias, and anxiety disorders. VR + AI will simulate safe, controlled environments to help patients confront and manage their mental health challenges. Future applications may use brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) to further personalize VR-based treatments.

AI for Mental Health in the Workplace & Schools²⁴

AI-powered wellness platforms will monitor and support mental well-being in workplaces and academic settings. AI-



driven burnout and stress prediction models will help organizations develop better mental health policies. Real-time AI assessments will provide instant coping strategies and mental health exercises to employees and students.

AI Integration with Neurology & Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCIs)²⁵

AI will enhance understanding of the neurological basis of mental health disorders, leading to more effective interventions. BCIs combined with AI could provide real-time mental health monitoring and direct brain stimulation for severe depression and anxiety. AI-powered neuro feedback training will help patient's self-regulate emotions and manage stress more effectively.

Ethical AI & Bias Reduction in Mental Health Care²⁶

AI models will be trained on more diverse datasets to ensure fairness across all demographics. Future AI regulations will prioritize transparency; explain ability, and patient data protection. Human-AI collaboration will ensure AI complements mental health professionals rather than replacing them.

AI for Global Mental Health Accessibility²⁶

AI will improve mental health care in low-resource settings by providing cost-effective, scalable solutions. AI-driven translation and cultural adaptation will make mental health services accessible in multiple languages and cultures. AI-based mobile mental health clinics could provide mental health support in remote areas

CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing mental health care by improving diagnosis, treatment, and patient support. AI-driven technologies, including chatbots, virtual therapists, predictive analytics, and personalized treatment plans, are making mental health services more accessible, efficient, and data-driven.

AI-powered tools such as natural language processing (NLP), facial recognition, and wearable monitoring devices enable early detection of mental health disorders, allowing for timely intervention and personalized therapy. Moreover, AI-driven Virtual Reality (VR) therapy, remote mental health monitoring, and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) automation are enhancing treatment effectiveness.

However, ethical concerns such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the need for human oversight remain significant challenges. While AI can enhance mental health care, it should complement, not replace, human therapists to ensure compassionate, personalized, and effective mental health support.

Looking ahead, AI has the potential to redefine mental health care, making it more proactive, inclusive, and accessible. With continued advancements, AI can help bridge gaps in mental health services, reduce stigma, and improve overall emotional well-being worldwide.

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