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Study Finds Many Medical AI Developers in Asia and the UK Lack Regulatory Awareness

A new study from Nanyang Technological University in Singapore suggests that while many developers of medical artificial intelligence recognize their responsibility for building safe healthcare technologies, awareness and adoption of regulatory frameworks remain limited. Researchers surveyed 122 medical AI developers from Singapore, China, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom to better understand their familiarity with existing regulations and their views on implementing governance standards during AI development.

The study found that just over half of respondents were aware of at least one medical AI regulatory framework, with more experienced developers reporting significantly greater familiarity than junior colleagues. Only around one-third said their organizations had formally adopted a recognized framework, and Singapore's Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare Guidelines—the most widely used—had been implemented by just 18% of respondents. Developers also described complying with regulatory requirements as complex, time-consuming and difficult, despite acknowledging that they themselves carry much of the responsibility for ensuring AI systems meet appropriate standards.

Researchers argued that improving awareness will require greater investment in education and organizational support. They recommended incorporating regulatory guidance into developer training programs, encouraging mentorship between senior and junior engineers, and promoting wider adoption of recognized frameworks by governments and regulators. The study also called for greater international alignment of medical AI regulations to reduce compliance challenges across countries and facilitate global collaboration in healthcare innovation.

The findings come as investment in healthcare AI continues to accelerate worldwide, increasing the importance of governance, patient safety and clinical accountability. Industry leaders interviewed alongside the study emphasized that regulation should be treated as a core design principle rather than an obstacle to innovation. They argued that healthcare organizations also need robust governance structures to evaluate, monitor and continuously audit AI systems after deployment, particularly as AI evolves toward increasingly autonomous technologies. According to the researchers, stronger regulatory awareness among developers will be essential to maintaining public trust while ensuring medical AI improves patient outcomes safely and responsibly.

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