

Almost half of administrative tasks in doctor's surgeries could be automated

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

With COVID-19 forcing the primary care sector to rethink priorities, a new report from Oxford suggest automation can transform doctors' surgeries, for the benefit of patients and staff.

Led by a team from Oxford Internet Institute, funded by independent

charity The Health Foundation, the ground-breaking report shows how the [digital age](#) can be embraced by GPs—freeing up countless hours for patient time but without loss of full time jobs

The team found that automation would:

- Affect 44% of all [administrative work](#) in general practice.
- Improve quality of care and work satisfaction.
- Not lead to any full time jobs losses.

The report was a response to the many challenges already faced by GPs—increased workloads, workforce shortages and [financial pressures](#). The pandemic has seen primary care clinicians and support staff forced to transition rapidly to digital ways of working.

Grounded in NHS data and observations, the report provides strong evidence of where automated solutions could work in transforming primary care. Countless hours could be freed up, enabling [healthcare workers](#) to spend more time with patients, reduce unpaid overtime, and improve overall job satisfaction.

Tim Horton, Associate Director of Improvement at the Health Foundation, said, 'Primary care was already under huge pressure before the COVID pandemic. As the NHS emerges from the current crisis, this report shows how better use of digital technology could help reduce administrative burdens on staff, freeing up more time to focus on patients, and in doing so could be one element of the broader strategy needed to reduce pressures in [primary care](#), alongside better recruitment and retention.'

"The Future of Healthcare: Computerisation, Automation and General Practice Services" is published today in *British Medical Journal Open*.

More information: Matthew Willis et al. Qualitative and quantitative approach to assess of the potential for automating administrative tasks in general practice, *BMJ Open* (2020). [DOI: 10.1136/bmjopen-2019-032412](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2019-032412)

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