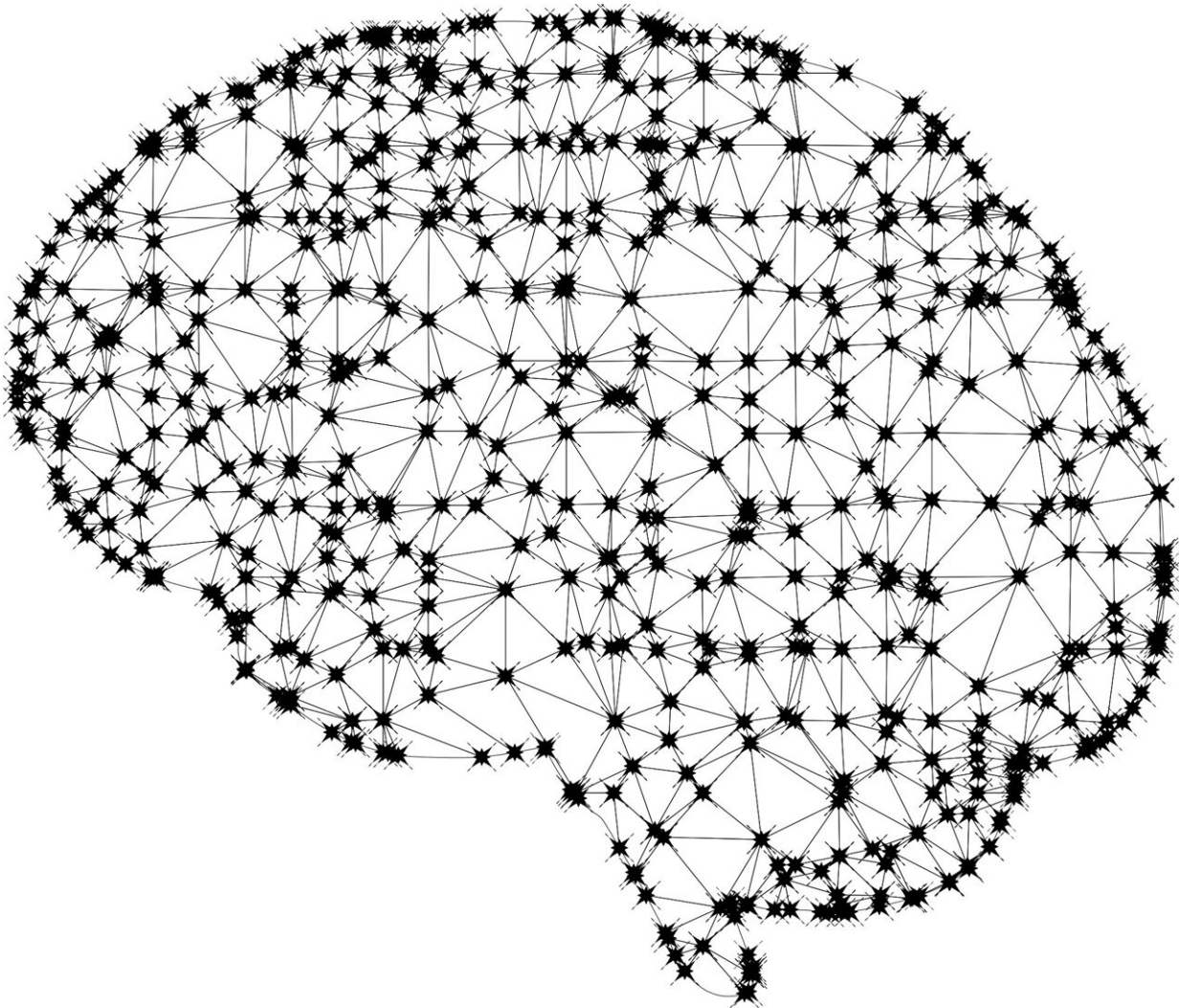


Nordic citizens must have a voice in the future of AI and health care, says researcher

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The Nordic countries' national strategies point to the growing scale and scope of AI in health care as inevitable and essential. But the future isn't set, and citizens must be involved in which path to take, says researcher Jason Tucker.

He has studied the Nordic countries' plans and claims that the direction is largely driven by a growing dependency on the private sector, and a reliance on its ability to innovate.

"With aging populations, increasing demand for personalized care and less funding for public health care, the states want to make health care more efficient. AI is seen as a magic pill to make this happen," says Tucker, senior lecturer at Malmö University.

According to Tucker, the Nordic countries' national AI strategies frame private sector implemented AI as the only solution to achieve efficiency. But if we follow this path, public health care will end up guided by private sector interests. We are already on our way there and it will be increasingly difficult to change direction in the future.

"Tax funds are being channeled to support certain private sector visions of AI applications in public health care. For better or worse, these will have an impact on our [future health](#)," says Tucker.

His article in the journal *Futures*, compares the national AI strategies in the four Nordic countries.

Although there are differences in terms of how and why this future should be realized, there is a common vision. This vision is of the ever-increasing scale and scope of AI as being inevitable, necessary and a process driven and implemented almost exclusively by the [private sector](#).

However, the descriptions of AI's future role in health care in the

national action plans are very vague.

In the short term, the strategies note that AI could help in areas such as diagnosis, patient-specific treatment and care. But in the medium to long term, the plans, according to Tucker, only refer to increased efficiency in the health system as a whole and avoid being specific about what that means.

"Efficiency can be good, but it means different things to different people. Innovation is also notoriously difficult to predict with the development of AI being no exception. Basing public health care on something so unpredictable is a risk," says Tucker.

He emphasizes that he is not inherently against private initiatives, who he notes have made remarkable breakthroughs in AI health; he only calls for careful consideration on the path we are taking.

"Citizens need to be involved in deciding the future of AI in health care. There are issues over ownership, procurement, transparency and accountability that we need to discuss. These are important debates to have as health care is a fundamental part of democracy and welfare. Essentially, this is about being included in conversations about our health, and what [future](#) we want for ourselves and the generations to follow."

More information: Jason Tucker, The future vision(s) of AI health in the Nordics: Comparing the national AI strategies, *Futures* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.futures.2023.103154](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2023.103154)

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