

Telehealth Newsletter

Official Newsletter of Telemedicine Society of India

What is New?

Telemedicon2024: A Resounding Success in Advancing Digital Healthcare

As the curtains closed on Telemedicon2024 last month, the global telemedicine and digital health community celebrated yet another milestone in redefining healthcare delivery. Held at PGI, Chandigarh, the event brought together innovators, and practitioners to discuss, collaborate, and shape the future of digital healthcare.

This year's event set new benchmarks in participation and engagement as there were almost half a dozen workshops workshop and for the first time Nursing and AYUSH workshops sections were included and these attracted many participants.

Key Takeaways from Telemedicon2024

- **Trailblazing Keynotes:** Esteemed speakers from around the country delivered impactful addresses on topics ranging from AI-driven healthcare solutions to the ethics of telemedicine. Their insights highlighted the immense potential of technology to bridge healthcare gaps while addressing challenges in accessibility and equity.
- **Dynamic Workshops:** Attendees gained hands-on experience with cutting-edge tools and technologies, such as AI-in healthcare, remote monitoring devices, and digital therapeutics.
- **Collaborative Panel Discussions:** Policy and industry experts debated pressing issues, including regulatory frameworks, data security, and the integration of digital health into traditional healthcare systems, paving the way for cohesive progress.
- **Technological Showcase:** The exhibition hall buzzed with excitement as startups and established companies unveiled the latest in healthcare technology, from wearable health monitors to blockchain applications for secure patient records.

A Platform for Global Networking

Telemedicon2024 was more than a conference; it was a meeting of minds. Almost 300 delegates from all over the country shared ideas, formed partnerships, and committed to driving innovation in healthcare. The event fostered an environment of collaboration that transcended borders and disciplines.

General Body Meeting

The general body was attended by almost 60 members and many issues were discussed. Dr. Murthy Remilla was elected as Vice president of the society.

The Road Ahead

As we look forward to Telemedicon2025 to be held at Bangalore, the momentum generated at this year's event will serve as a foundation for further progress, ensuring that digital health remains a cornerstone of global healthcare transformation.

This December issue is dedicated to **TELEMEDICON2024**. Wish our members a Happy New Year!

Thank You

Dr. Sunil Shroff

Chief Editor

President-Elect, TSI



TELEMEDICON 2024: PGIMER Chandigarh

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1. Title and Date of the Conference: 20th International Conference of Telemedicine Society of India (TSI) TELEMEDICON 2024. (28th to 30th November, 2024)

2. Introduction and Objectives: Welcome to **TELEMEDICON**, 2024 the premier conference dedicated to advancing telemedicine and digital health innovations! In a world where technology is transforming healthcare delivery, **TELEMEDICON** serves as a vital platform to bring together visionaries, healthcare professionals, technologists, policymakers, and innovators. This event is designed to explore cutting-edge advancements, foster collaboration, and discuss the challenges and opportunities shaping the future of telemedicine. This year's conference, themed "**Virtual Healthcare and the Role of AI**."

3. Venue, Chief Guest and Organizers:

The **TELEMEDICON** conference held at the prestigious Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education &

Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, utilizing its state-of-the-art facilities. The sessions will take place across three key venues: Bhargava Auditorium (Hall A), Lecture Theatre 1 (Hall B), and Lecture Theatre 2 (Hall C), providing an ideal setting for immersive discussions and networking.

The **Chief Guest** and **Guest of honour** for Telemedicon 2024 were:

A) **Chief Guest:** Shri Madhukar Kumar Bhagat (Joint Secretary, e- Health Division, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India.

B) **Guest of Honour:** Dr KK Talwar (Ex Director PGI Chandigarh and Chairman PSRI Hospital, New Delhi)

The event was organized under the esteemed leadership of:

Chairperson: Prof. Biman Saikia

Organizing Secretary: Prof. Uma Nahar Saikia

Co-organizing Secretary cum Treasurer: Dr. Amit Agarwal

Their dedication and expertise ensure a well-curated platform to explore and advance the frontiers of telemedicine and digital health.

4. Conference Agenda

• Keynote Speeches:

- a) Dr Meenu Singh: Evolution of telemedicine (International & India)
- b) Dr Alok Modi: Steps involved in design and development including ethical issues in AI
- c) Dr Kim R: Presidential oration

• Panel Discussions:

- a) Tele-pathology Unplugged: Next Gen Diagnostics and AI Convergence
- b) Tele-Technology in Facilitating Organ Transplant
- c) AI for Diabetic Retinopathy

• Workshops:

- A) Wadhvani AI: AI readiness
- B) Telemedicine & Digital Health for AYUSH doctors
- C) Tele-ICU
- D) Digital Data & technology in Nursing

5. Oral/Poster Sessions: The event featured a total of **12 award papers**, **11 free papers**, and **27 posters**, showcasing significant advancements and research. There were **three Best Oral Paper Awards** and **three Best Poster Awards**.

6. Credit Hours Announcement for TELEMEDICON 2024:

We are pleased to announce that TELEMEDICON 2024 was accredited with **11 PMC Credit Hours** for participating medical professionals. Additionally, nurses attending the conference earned **5 Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) hours**, with each hour equivalent to **1 CNE credit**.

This accreditation underscores the high educational value of TELEMEDICON 2024, offering participants the opportunity to enhance their professional knowledge and skills while earning valuable continuing education credits.

7. Major Highlights :

Advancing Virtual Healthcare and AI at PGIMER, Chandigarh (28th & 29th November, 2024)

Dr. Biman Saikia, chairperson, inaugurated the first session on AI in Healthcare. Renowned urologist Dr. Sunil Shroff delivered an enlightening talk on intelligent medicine: how AI is shaping the future of healthcare, followed by Dr. Alok Modi, who discussed the ethical dimensions and challenges posed by AI in healthcare, and Dr. Kim R., who elaborated on AI applications in ophthalmology, especially in diabetic retinopathy.

A plenary session on the trajectory of telemedicine by Dr. Meenu Singh emphasized the rapid evolution of telemedicine, chaired by Dr. K. K. Talwar, Ex-Director, PGIMER, Chandigarh, and Dr. Prem Nair, Director, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences. Further sessions explored telemedicine in health promotion, prevention, and lifestyle management. Dr. Shriram V. Kulkarni from Mumbai shared insights into leveraging AI accessibility in underserved regions.

The Tele-Ophthalmology Society of India (TOSI) session included talks by Dr. T. Senthil on business models for tele-ophthalmology and innovative methods for early detection of diseases by Dr. B. N. R. Subudhi. The day also featured a session on telemedicine for elder care by Dr. Rajeev Agarwal and Dr. Thanga Prabhu. Parallel sessions on tele-dermatopathology and tele-yoga provided further depth, along with a dedicated workshop on AI readiness by Wadhvani AI.

The inaugural ceremony, held in the evening, was presided over by Shri Madhukar Kumar Bhagat, Joint Secretary, E-Health Section, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, with Prof. K. K. Talwar and Prof. R. K. Ratho, Dean of Academics, PGIMER, Chandigarh, as Guests of Honour.

The second day commenced with a workshop on setting up a virtual practice, and sessions addressing legal, ethical, and regulatory considerations in telemedicine, use of personal data in healthcare, data privacy and ethics in healthcare, and an assessment of Telemedicine Practice Guidelines (TPG) by Dr. Ashvini Goel.

A presidential oration by Dr. Kim R. and a session on tele-education and AR/VR in health education, highlighted the role of technology in medical learning. The plenary session on space medicine showcased presentations by **Dr. D. K. Singh, Jayakumar Venkateshan and Dr. Murthy Remilla from ISRO**, emphasizing importance of healthcare in space. Afternoon sessions focused on telemedicine's impact on rural health and tele-palliative care.

In addition, telemedicine in childhood health, AI in medical devices and AI applications in emergency care were discussed. Many free papers and award-winning papers were presented by young professionals. This was

followed by a panel discussion on tele-pathology unplugged – nextgen diagnostics & AI convergence, brought together by an expert panel. The concluding session, tele-technology in facilitating organ transplant featured utility of telemedicine in donor/recipient coordination. A special workshop on telemedicine & digital health for AYUSH doctors was chaired by **Dr. Nipun Jindal, IAS**, sharing his expertise.

The 20th International Conference of TSI, TELEMEDICON 2024, continues to serve as a collaborative platform for healthcare and IT professionals, emphasizing the transformative role of AI and telemedicine in global healthcare. The event will conclude on November 30, 2024.

Concluding day of Telemedicon 2024: Showcasing Innovation and Technology in Telemedicine (30th November, 2024)

The final day of Telemedicon 2024 held at PGIMER, Chandigarh concluded on a high note, showcasing the transformative potential of technology in healthcare. The highlights ranged from thought-provoking sessions to workshops addressing innovations in telemedicine, AI and digital health. The day began with an engaging session on **Technology as a Disruptor in Critical Care** by **Dr. Mandar Vaidya**. A dedicated session on **Tele-ICU** systems was held, with focus on adoption of tele-ICU technologies to address challenges in resource-constrained environments. Sessions on **AI Literacy for Clinicians and Inclusive and Responsible AI for Mental Health** were also held.

A parallel workshop on **Digital Data and Technology in Nursing** was organized by the **National Institute of Nursing Education (NINE), PGIMER, Chandigarh** under the leadership of principal **Dr. Sukhpal Kaur**, which was attended by more than 200 delegates. The session began with inauguration by the medical

superintendent **Dr. Vipin Kaushal**, with **Lt. Col. Dr. Sarabjeet Kaur** from **Indian Nursing Council** as guest of honour, awarding 5 credit hours for the workshop. Integration of digital tools in nursing, importance of documentation and potential of mobile health applications and AI for patient care were discussed.

The event culminated in the valedictory session, graced by esteemed chief guest **Shri Hanumanta Rayappa, Director, ISRO**. He emphasized the synergy between space technology and telemedicine, highlighting ISRO's pivotal contributions to expanding healthcare access in India. The session was followed by the award ceremony, recognizing 3 best oral and poster presentations by **Gaurang Baxi, Dr. Hima K Bindu, Dr. Brijdeep Singh, Dr. Jatinder Kumar** and **Ankita Kumar**. The chairperson of Telemedicon 2024 **Dr. Biman Saikia**, presented the conference report, consisting of more than 500 registrations including conference and workshops, 38 sessions with 5 dedicated workshops, and the award of 11 CME credit hours by **Punjab Medical Council**. The medallion between outgoing TSI president **Dr. Kim R** and incoming president **Dr. Prem Nair** were exchanged. The Secretary TSI announced Bangalore as next year's venue for the conference, and concluding remarks were given by organizing secretaries **Dr. Uma Nahar** and **Dr. Amit Agarwal**, extending thanks to everyone, including the organizing team, especially **Dr. Richa, Mrs. Maanvi, Dr. Arun** and **Mr. Nainesh** for their support in conducting a successful conference.

Telemedicon 2024, through its diverse sessions and expert-led discussions, has reaffirmed its position as a leading platform for fostering innovation in telemedicine. By bridging the gap between technology and healthcare, the conference sets the stage for a future where healthcare is not only accessible but also equitable for all.

8. **Speakers, Chairpersons and Participants:**

TELEMEDICON 2024 brought together a vibrant community of **466 participants**, reflecting the diverse interests in telemedicine and digital health. This included **179 conference participants**, along with specialized workshops that attracted **35 participants for AI, 40 for AYUSH, and 212 for Nursing**.

The conference featured an impressive lineup of **65 distinguished speakers**, who shared their expertise and insights across various sessions. Additionally, **74 chairpersons** skillfully moderated discussions, ensuring an engaging and thought-provoking exchange of ideas.

Together, this dynamic gathering of thought leaders, professionals, and learners created an enriching platform for collaboration and innovation in healthcare.

9. Technologies/Trends Highlighted: Tech Eagle Innovations Pvt. Ltd. demonstrated cutting-edge drone technology, highlighting its potential in revolutionizing healthcare logistics. Their innovative solutions focus on enabling fast and efficient delivery of medical supplies, vaccines, and emergency equipment to remote and underserved areas. The showcase emphasized the role of drones in enhancing accessibility, reducing response times, and improving healthcare outcomes through advanced automation and precision.

10. Recommendations and Next Steps: With the conclusion of this year's TELEMEDICON 2024, a recommendation was made in GBM to conduct TELEMEDICON 2025 next year at **Bangalore** by TSI members. Voting was conducted in GBM by TSI members for electing vice president TSI and **Dr Murthy Remilla** was elected as **vice president** of TSI

Conference photographs



Inaugural Ceremony



Drone Technology Showcasing



Dr Prem Nair Elected as National TSI President



Group Photograph



Annual General Body Meeting - Telemedicine Society of India (TSI)

Prof. (Dr) Umashankar S.

Managing Director Med.Bot | Honorary Secretary, Telemedicine Society of India

The 20th Annual Conference of the Telemedicine Society of India (TSI) took place at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, from 28th to 30th November 2024. A key event of the conference was the 20th Annual General Body Meeting (AGBM), held on 29th November 2024, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, during Telemedicon 2024 at Bhargava Auditorium. The AGM was conducted in a hybrid format, enabling participation both in person and online.

The meeting commenced with opening remarks by the President, who highlighted TSI's achievements over the past year and presented the society's vision for future growth. The minutes of the 2023 AGM and the Auditor's Report for the financial year 2022-2023 were reviewed and unanimously approved by the members.

A detailed discussion followed, focusing on key agenda items, including TSI's growth trajectory and a comprehensive review of the society's initiatives, encapsulated in the TSI 20 Points (T 20). The Honorary Secretary presented a thorough report summarizing the society's accomplishments, challenges, and ongoing initiatives. This was followed by a presentation from the Treasurer, who shared the audit reports and outlined the financial plan for the upcoming year. Members commended the society's progress, approved the activities, and contributed valuable suggestions for further advancement.

One of the highlights of the AGM was the election for the position of Vice President. The election was conducted via ballot, with manual vote counting carried out immediately in the presence of all attendees. Dr. Remilla Murthy was declared the winner, securing the highest number of votes and earning widespread congratulations.

The meeting concluded with the Honorary Secretary expressing gratitude to all members for their active participation and contributions. The President delivered closing remarks, emphasizing the importance of collective efforts in advancing telemedicine in India. The AGM ended on a positive note, marking another successful milestone in TSI's journey.

TELEMEDICON 2024 - Award Winning Abstracts

Advancing Telepathology: Experience from a Tertiary Care Centre of Excellence

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Aims and Objectives: To assess the implementation of Telepathology services at PGIMER-Centre of Excellence for Telepathology, Department of Telemedicine, launched on November 1st, 2023.

The study outlines the methodology, case diversity, platforms used, and the impact on diagnostic efficiency and accessibility.

Methodology: Telepathology services are delivered through three platforms: email submissions, the GOI, e-Sanjeevani portal, and Onward Assist Telereporting system, a private enterprise specializing in Telepathology and AI solutions. These services offered free during a One year trial period, receive cases from Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and New Delhi. Referring pathologists submit photomicrographs, videos, along with detailed requisition forms. A Telepathology (TP) number is assigned after verifying image quality.

The targeted turnaround time is 24-48 hours post-assignment of the TP number. A digital report is generated for each case.

Results: A total of 380 Telepathology consultations have been conducted, with 285 cases (75%) from private hospitals and 95 cases (25%) from government institutions. The subspecialties covered include Ocular Pathology (102/380), Head and neck pathology (56/380), Dermatopathology (55/380), Gastrointestinal Pathology (41/380), Gyanepathology (21/380), Pulmonary Pathology (16/380), Neuropathology (13/380), Musculoskeletal Pathology (12/380) Genitourinary Pathology (10/380), Breast Pathology 10/380), Cytopathology (33/380) and others. 12 cases were initially deemed unsatisfactory due to poor image quality but were later reported upon receiving better images. Comprehensive diagnoses were rendered in 90% (340) of cases, while 10% (40) required descriptive reports due to insufficient diagnostic material or inadequate information.

Conclusion: Telepathology is a transformative tool in digital pathology, enabling expert opinions across wide geographic regions, reducing turnaround time, and facilitating remote teaching and training. It significantly enhances diagnostic accuracy, improves clinical management, and contributes to better healthcare outcomes.

Revolutionizing Home Healthcare: Smartphone -Based Video-Electroencephalography for Neurological Disorders

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Aim: Despite the established advantages of home-based long-term Electroencephalography (EEG) monitoring, with studies demonstrating a 72% sensitivity compared to only 11% for routine EEGs in detecting abnormalities (Hernandez-Ronquillo et al., 2023; Beckerman et al., 2013), there is no availability of home based monitoring in India. This study aimed to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of a novel smartphone-based video EEG system for conducting home EEG procedures in India.

Methods: Twenty patients were referred for home EEG monitoring by neurologists in Bengaluru. Qualified EEG technologists performed the setup including electrode placement at patients' homes. They also remotely monitored EEG quality during the procedure and collected data upon completion. A qualified epileptologist remotely reviewed and interpreted the EEG data and provided the final diagnosis and recommendations.

Results: The smartphone-based system proved highly feasible, with patients successfully undergoing procedures in the comfort of their homes. The system's user-friendliness and convenience reduced the need for frequent in-clinic visits. Key benefits of home EEG monitoring include improved access to neurological care, early detection of seizures or other neurological events, and reduced healthcare costs.

Conclusion: This study highlights the potential of smartphone-based video EEG systems to revolutionize neurological care in India by enhancing patient outcomes and improving efficiency.

Improving Thyroid Nodule Evaluation Using Deep Learning and Ultrasound Imaging

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Introduction: The thyroid is a small, butterfly-shaped gland in the neck that produces hormones essential for

regulating various metabolic processes. Common thyroid conditions include thyroid nodules abnormal growths or lumps within the thyroid as well as hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism.

Methods- Thyroid ultrasonography (USG) imaging is widely used to detect and categorize thyroid abnormalities, which can significantly impact metabolism and overall health. Advances in artificial intelligence (AI), especially deep learning (DL), have enabled the identification and analysis of patterns in clinical images due to DL's ability to extract hierarchical feature representations from images without the need for annotated data. Accurate identification of malignant thyroid nodules, distinguishing them from benign ones, is crucial in reducing unnecessary fine needle aspiration (FNA) procedures. This study presents a technique for thyroid nodule detection in USG images using DL for feature extraction. Two pre-trained DL models ResNet-18 and VGG-19 were fine-tuned for classifying thyroid USG images. Both models were trained and tested on the Digital Database of Thyroid Ultrasound Images (DDTI), a gold standard dataset.

Results showed classification accuracies of 97.13% for ResNet-18 and 90.31% for VGG-19, with ResNet-18 demonstrating superior performance in classification accuracy over VGG-19.

Tele-Ocular Pathology: Evaluating Remote Diagnostic Accuracy through Email Submissions

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Aims and Objectives- This study evaluates the effectiveness and diagnostic concordance of ocular pathology cases from over 400 telepathology referrals received at PGIMER, Chandigarh's Centre of Excellence in Telepathology at the Regional Resource Centre (North). The study highlights how email-based telepathology supports rapid, high-quality diagnostics, enhancing patient convenience and clinical decision-making.

Methodology- A retrospective analysis of 104 ocular pathology cases reviewed from November 1st 2023 to October 31st 2024, was conducted. The workflow included an initial assessment of image quality for photomicrographs, clinical images, and videos for quality and reportability, with follow-ups as needed for optimization. Each case was assigned a TP number and categorized by diagnostic parameters to establish concordance between the provisional diagnosis of the referring pathologist and the final telepathology report. Ancillary tests such as special stains and immunohistochemistry (IHC), were recommended, as required, to enhance diagnostic accuracy.

Results- Among the 104 ocular telepathology cases analysed, 67 (64.4%) were neoplastic (36 malignant, 31 benign) and 37 (35.6%) were non-neoplastic. Topographic distribution included 32 eyelid, 29 conjunctiva, 13 enucleation, 13 orbit, 8 lacrimal gland, and 8 other cases. Concordance between the provisional and final diagnoses was achieved in 79.8% of cases, underscoring the reliability of this model. Static images sometimes proved limited, particularly in enucleation cases, where video submissions provided crucial diagnostic context. On average, each case included 7.4 photomicrographs, 1.8 clinical images, and 1.65 videos. Recommendations for ancillary tests were provided selectively. The model achieved an average turnaround of 12-18 hours, providing significant time and cost savings for patients and aiding therapeutic decision making.

Conclusion- Email-based ocular telepathology presents a robust and efficient model for remote diagnostics, delivering high diagnostic concordance and substantial patient benefits. This framework establishes a standard for image quality and reporting formats, ensuring high-quality diagnostic support across remote and underserved areas.

Serious Games in Healthcare: A New Frontier for Indian Healthcare Innovation

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Serious games, designed with the purpose of addressing real-world issues through interactive gameplay, incorporate educational, therapeutic, and motivational elements to positively impact health behaviors and encourage healthy lifestyles. In the context of healthcare, serious games offer a unique opportunity to revolutionize the sector by making health-related tasks both engaging and educational. With India's rapidly expanding digital reach and gaming industry, the healthcare sector presents fertile ground for serious games. Serious games in healthcare have been applied previously in various clinical trials as an intervention, where they were proved to be effective in a variety of diseases such as cancer, asthma and mental health disorders. However, challenges persist, including the need for culturally sensitive design and the active involvement of healthcare professionals in development, which is crucial for ensuring credibility and effectiveness. In India, serious games face additional hurdles such as regional diversity and cultural norms. Nevertheless, the potential for growth is significant, with India poised to become a leading hub for digital health games, spurred by increased internet access, the advent of 5G, and evolving consumer behaviors. The Indian government's support for the gaming industry, including 100% foreign direct investment, further bolsters growth prospects. To fully leverage the potential of serious games in Indian healthcare, strategies must be culturally relevant and socially acceptable to ensure their impact. With thoughtful implementation and increased collaboration between the healthcare and gaming industries, serious games can help with improving level of knowledge, changing behaviours, improving motor skills and managing emotions.

The first survey on nurses knowledge attitude and practice on connected care monitoring in wards

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Introduction: Enhanced Connected Care (ECC) is transforming healthcare by integrating technology to advance patient monitoring and safety. Through continuous tracking of vital signs—heart rate, blood pressure, Saturation, temperature, and respiratory rate—medical devices transmit data to a nursing station dashboard, enabling prompt nurse response. Nurses play a vital role in detecting early signs of patient deterioration, making their knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) critical to ECC's success and effective patient care.

Aim of the Study: To evaluate confidence in using ECC technologies, time savings, perceived benefits and challenges, and the need for further training.

Results: The study surveyed 125 participants involved in ECC care, with 61% rating their confidence as 10/10 in using ECC technologies. Younger nurses (18-34 years) showed higher confidence, and increased nursing experience was significantly correlated with higher confidence. ECC monitoring saved 5-10 minutes per shift for 47.2% of respondents, with more than 10 minutes saved mostly during night shifts. A significant correlation was found between knowledge and confidence ($p=0.009$).

Discussion: Lower confidence levels among nurses aged 35-44 indicate a need for targeted support through workshops or additional training to enhance their comfort with ECC technology. The positive link between knowledge and confidence suggests that regular training could enhance nurses' proficiency with ECC tools. Greater time savings were noted during night shifts, aligning with the increased need for continuous monitoring during non-peak hours. Alarm fatigue was reported by 42% of ECC-using staff.

Conclusion: This study shows ECC technology's broad use and perceived benefits in improving patient

outcomes. Nurses view ECC as a valuable tool that saves time, allowing for more direct patient care rather than manual vitals recording. Nonetheless, challenges remain. Targeted workshops, support teams, and improved resources could further support ECC integration in healthcare practice.

Tech Humor

Tell me a witty response in one line for the following question. "Why did the AI become a radiologist?"

Because it could not read between the *lines* - even if they were X-rays!

Why did the AI become an orthopedic surgeon?

Because it had a knack for *breaking it down and putting it back together!*

Why did the AI become an obstetrician?

Because it was great at delivering results!

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