Issues with Utilizing AI for Searching Evidence/Literature

1. "Black Box" Problem – Lack of Transparency

- **Proprietary Algorithms Limit Transparency**: AI models often rely on proprietary methods, making it difficult for users to understand how conclusions are drawn.
  - This lack of transparency undermines Evidence-Based Practice (EBP), which depends on the ability to critically evaluate evidence.
  - A new skill emerging in the clinical field will be the ability to appraise AI-generated answers.
- **Inability to Assess AI-Generated Insights**: Clinicians and researchers cannot fully analyze how AI produces responses, making validation and assessment difficult.

2. Evidence Quality and Biases

- **Limited Literature Coverage**: AI tools primarily rely on publicly available sources, like PubMed, which may exclude critical peer-reviewed studies.
  - PubMed and other platforms often provide abstracts rather than full-text articles.
  - Some platforms integrate proprietary databases, but overall coverage remains incomplete.
- **Bias in Data Sets**: Pre-existing biases in training data can perpetuate disparities or distort findings, negatively affecting clinical decision-making.
  - Publisher-created tools are largely trained on proprietary content, biasing results toward that publisher's journals.
- **Risk of Misleading Conclusions**: AI-generated insights may be inaccurate or incomplete due to gaps in data or inconsistencies in sourcing.

Roy Brown (rebrown2@vcu.edu).

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3. **Reliability and Reproducibility**

    - **Inconsistent Results Reduce Reproducibility**: AI performance can vary depending on prompts and clinical context, making it difficult to replicate queries consistently.

    - **Outdated Data and Limited Knowledge**: Many AI models rely on fixed training sets and lack access to the latest research, leading to outdated recommendations.

    - **Hallucinations in AI Outputs**: AI-generated content can present false information confidently as fact, posing risks in clinical applications.

4. **Limited Contextual Understanding**

    - **Surface-Level Knowledge**: AI may lack the depth and specialized expertise needed for niche medical domains.

    - **Challenges with Complex or Ambiguous Queries**: AI struggles to analyze complex clinical issues, leading to gaps in understanding.

        - Unusual but clinically significant patterns may go undetected, reducing AI's reliability in specialized cases.

5. **Ethical Concerns and Misuse**

    - **Data Privacy Risks**: Some AI tools store or analyze search queries, raising concerns about patient confidentiality in medical research and healthcare.

    - **Plagiarism and Attribution Issues**: AI-generated summaries may replicate existing literature without proper citation, leading to ethical concerns.

    - **Regulatory Uncertainty**: There are no standardized guidelines for evaluating or integrating AI-driven evidence retrieval into healthcare decision-making.

Roy Brown (rebrown2@vcu.edu).

6. **Challenges in Interpreting AI-Generated Evidence**

    - **Lack of Critical Appraisal**: AI models do not assess study quality, making it easier for users to misinterpret flawed or biased research.
    - **Over-Reliance on AI Without Verification**: Clinicians and researchers may accept AI-generated conclusions at face value without conducting proper scrutiny.
    - **Difficulty in Synthesizing Conflicting Findings**: AI tools often struggle to integrate contradictory research or recognize trends across multiple studies.

Best Practices for Using AI

1. Hybrid / Complementary Approach

- Never rely on a single source.
- Use multiple tools (AI, databases, web search) to ensure broader coverage and richer insights.

2. Choose the Right Tool for the Task

- Match your tool to the information need and the stakes involved.
- Recognize that different AI tools serve different roles in the EBP workflow.
- Be aware of each tool's limitations.

3. Evaluation & Critical Thinking Are Key

- Always appraise the quality and credibility of information.
- Use AI to support, not replace, your judgment.
- Resolve discrepancies by comparing sources and context.

4. Practice Iterative Refinement

- Be open to revisiting earlier steps as new insights emerge.
- Document your process: note when AI was used, how searches evolved, and key decision points.

Roy Brown (rebrown2@vcu.edu).

5. Use AI Responsibly & Ethically

- Be transparent about AI use in your work.
- Avoid plagiarism, fabricated citations, and misrepresentation.
- Protect privacy: never input sensitive patient or institutional data.
- Understand what data the AI tool collects and how it's stored.

Roy Brown (rebrown2@vcu.edu).

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Roy Brown (rebrown2@vcu.edu).