**How Has Technology Changed Medicine?**

**The Internet has become a main source of medical information**

In recent years more and more people are going online to check symptoms, explore treatment options and get educated. In fact, in 2009 more than 24 million Americans went online to find information on their health or the health of a loved one. While the internet will never replace a visit to the doctor, it does give patients access to more information than ever before. The Internet has empowered patients to assist medical professionals in making important health care decisions and about what the next step should be. Currently, some medical professionals are encouraging patients to explore online before their next appointment. This empowerment is making patients and doctors partners in care.

**Healthcare facilities are reaching patients using social media**

It started out on college campuses but has recently started spreading to other health care facilities. Right now, hospitals are mostly using social media, but the possibilities are endless. With more and more people joining Facebook and Twitter, it would make sense to use these to reach potential patients. Some ways that social media is being used is to establish contact with patients, answer questions about practices, launch public service campaigns, and community outreach. There are even reports of some more advanced systems that are reminding people that they are in need of important tests or immunizations. In the future, it could be possible to chat with a nurse online about symptoms before ever calling the office for an appointment.

**There is better treatment with less suffering**

The biggest change in medicine has been on the new machines, medicine and treatments. This alone has saved lives and given millions of people a chance to recover and lead a full life. Machines give doctors a look inside the body without having to perform surgery. X-rays, CAT scans and MRI machines have made it possible to diagnosis a wide range of issues without invading the body. It has also allowed for better pre-natal care for mothers and treatment of babies when they are still in the womb. Ultrasound also allows physicians to be prepared for the needs of babies as soon as they are born.

**Improved patient care and work efficiency**

More and more health care facilities are moving to digital records. This has made patient care safer than ever before and more reliable. Medical professionals use hand held computers to input information. Then vitals, lab results and medicine are automatically uploaded into a central database. This makes data available to researchers and will lead to even better treatment. Electronic records also allow patients access to their information and can help them better understand their healthcare needs.

**Doctors are easier to reach and better at their jobs**

Doctors now have access to hundreds of Medical Journals with a touch of the Smart Phone. They also can use something called Telemedicine to treat patients. Telemedicine is the ability to consult with experts all over the world on treatment options using text, email and video conferencing. This is especially important to physicians who work in rural or under developed areas. It allows the treatment of patients without having to move them. Telemedicine was used during the 2010 earthquake in Haiti with success and will be improved in the future.

**Online databases can accurately predict medical trends**

This was one of the biggest surprises of information technology. Google was able to take information from searched for terms and not only determine where the flu was currently active, but also where it was likely spreading next. This information was accurate and faster than the CDC. This will also allow doctors and health care facilities to be prepared and respond to outbreaks. It will also allow them to take preventative measures. (Krueger, 2010)

# Bibliography

Krueger, A. (2010, December 20). *6 Ways Technology is Improving Healthcare.* Retrieved June 2014, from Business Insider: http://www.businessinsider.com/6-ways-technology-is-improving-healthcare-2010-12?op=1