MACHINE M.D.
A LONG TIME COMING

NATHAN CORTEZ
SMU LAW
Hearts in France
Analyzed in U.S.
In a Satellite Test

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 5 — A computer in Washington studied human hearts beating in France and relayed the analyses back to the bedsides almost instantly today via communications satellite.

The computer analyzed the heart data in 15 seconds and printed an interpretation that was sent back to France by the same route. The interpretation was being received in Tours, about 30 seconds after the end of the transmission from that point.

The feat demonstrated a system developed by the Public Health Service for analyzing electrocardiogram signals at long range and within seconds.

An electrocardiogram is a recording of the electrical activity of a person's heart. To an expert, it contains important clues to the condition of the heart.

In the test today, electrocardiograms were taken on volunteers at a scientific meeting in Tours, France. These were transmitted via telephone and communications satellite to the United States, where they were relayed by RCA Communications, Inc., to Washington.

The New York Times
Published: July 6, 1967
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Might the Computer Be Used to Appraise the Physician?

If the computer comes to play a major part in diagnosis and treatment, the computer system itself can readily be used to evaluate physician performance. Special programs could collect information on the frequency with which consultations are requested, and the numbers and types of questions asked,
1978

COMPUTERS IN HEALTH CARE

HEARINGS BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC
PLANNING, ANALYSIS AND COOPERATION
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION
MAY 9, 10, AND 11, 1978
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1981

HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEMS

HEARINGS BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY
AND THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND ENVIRONMENT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NINETY-SEVENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION
JUNE 2, 3, 4; JULY 22, 1981
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Committee on Science and Technology
Q: Safe and effective?

Q: Who should use them? And when?

Q: Physician autonomy?

Q: Doctor-patient relationship?

Q: Legal liability?

Q: Use in rationing?
The overarching question may be put thus: does the new technology improve patient care? If the answer is affirmative, we may suppose we have met an important responsibility. If the answer is negative, it seems clear we should not use the new technology. The problem is, we often do not know how to answer the question.
The debate over medical software regulation represents one of the most important controversies of the Computer Age. The balancing of risks and benefits, as well as public safety and technological progress, means that scientists, clinicians, and policy makers have one of civilization’s most interesting—and challenging—tasks.
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