

Recontextualizing NLP in Healthcare: A Survey on LLM-Based Multi-Agent AI Hospitals

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Abstract

Large Language Models (LLMs) are increasingly being used as autonomous agents in high-stakes domains, yet their behavior in complex, real-world environments remains under-explored. This survey introduces the concept of AI hospitals—LLM-driven multi-agent ecosystems that simulate clinical workflows and support a wide range of medical applications. We review 70+ recent studies and propose a taxonomy covering core components and application areas. By analyzing how these systems integrate language, knowledge, and interaction in dynamic settings, we highlight AI hospitals as a powerful testbed for evaluating LLMs beyond static benchmarks. We also outline open challenges in aligning LLM behavior with clinical reasoning, safety, and patient-centered goals, offering a roadmap for the future at the intersection of NLP and healthcare.

1 Introduction

Over the past decade, natural language processing (NLP) and artificial intelligence (AI) have achieved significant advances across tasks such as translation, summarization, and question answering. In recent years, Large Language Models (LLMs) have emerged as a transformative force, demonstrating strong generalization, reasoning, and interaction capabilities. Beyond text generation, LLMs are increasingly being deployed as autonomous agents capable of decision-making and collaboration in real-world systems. A promising example of this shift is the AI hospital: a multi-agent simulation framework in which LLMs act as diverse clinical agents—doctors, nurses, patients, researchers—within simulated hospital environments. These systems go beyond static benchmark evaluation by enabling dynamic, interdisciplinary assessments of agent behavior in clinical decision-making, education, mental health support, and collaborative research. Despite growing interest, re-

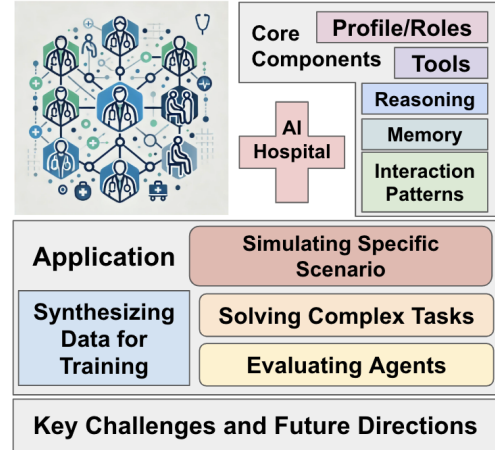


Figure 1: Overview of the LLM-based multi-agent AI Hospital. Figure 2 & 3 present the taxonomy of core components and applications. Table 2 and 3 in the appendix outline the key challenges and future directions.

search on AI hospitals remains fragmented. Existing studies often focus on isolated multi-agent applications, lacking a unifying framework to connect them. To date, no prior survey has systematically examined these efforts through the lens of AI hospitals, nor analyzed their core components, applications, and open challenges.

This survey addresses this gap by organizing 70+ recent studies into a structured taxonomy across three dimensions: **1) Core Components:** Analyzing the fundamental elements of AI hospitals, including agent roles, interaction patterns, tool integration, memory management, and reasoning mechanisms. **2) Applications:** Investigating how AI hospitals contribute to simulating specific medical scenarios, solving complex tasks, evaluating agents, and generating synthetic data for training medical AI systems. **3) Key Challenges & Future Directions.** By providing a cohesive framework, this work aims to strengthen collaboration between NLP and healthcare communities and to recontextualize LLMs as agents within real-world systems.

2 Core Components

2.1 Agent Roles

Patient-Centered Agents are designed to simulate patients with different demographic backgrounds, health conditions, and communication abilities. **Patient Agent** supports various applications in AI hospitals, such as clinical training, patient education, and medical history collection. Many works (Bao et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023a) focus on enhancing the realism of patient agents. Recent studies (Du et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024d; Yu et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2025) also leverage evolutionary learning, fine-tuning techniques, Chain-of-Thought (CoT), and Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) to enhance patient agents’ consistency, realism, and role-playing stability while reducing hallucinations. **Psychological Patient Agent** (PPA) simulates mental health conditions for AI-driven treatment training (Wang et al., 2024b; Wei et al., 2024a). Unlike general patient agents, PPAs must replicate mood changes, cognitive distortions, and treatment resistance, with studies focusing on authenticity through expert-guided prompt engineering (Louie et al., 2024), structured cognitive modeling (Wang et al., 2024d), and simulations fostering adaptive communication (Chen et al., 2023b). **Resident Agents** model general populations transitioning into patient agents when ill, autonomously navigating healthcare processes while also supporting public health simulations and epidemiological modeling by incorporating disease progression, healthcare-seeking behavior, and policy interventions (Li et al., 2024b; Williams et al., 2023). **Medical Professional Agents** can perform tasks such as patient consultation, medical history collection, clinical reasoning, diagnostic decision-making, emotional support, care coordination, and auxiliary examinations. **General Doctor Agent**, often called primary care physician (PCP), performs initial patient assessments and oversees the diagnostic process. Several studies have explored various aspects of these agents, including their questioning strategies (Liu et al., 2025), autonomous learning for diagnostic optimization (Du et al., 2024), reasoning in clinical conversations (Johri et al., 2023), adaptive multi-agent collaboration (Kim et al., 2024), the role of PCP in diagnosis (Wang et al., 2024a), and their integration into AI hospital environments (Fan et al., 2024). **Specialist Agent** represents domain-specific medical experts such as cardiologists, radiologists, and

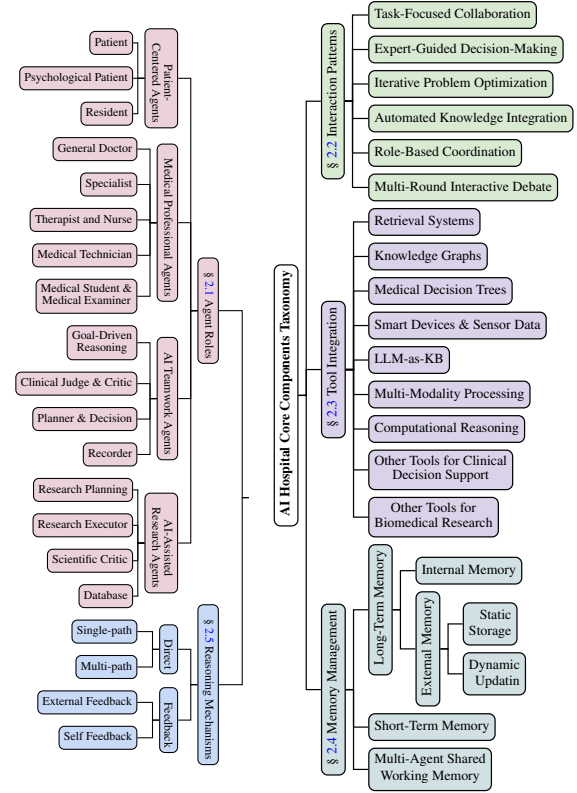


Figure 2: Taxonomy of AI hospital core components.

hematologists, for handling complex cases and contributing expert knowledge to diagnostic and treatment decision-making. Specialist agents require high-precision reasoning, deep medical expertise, and the ability to collaborate effectively in multi-disciplinary team (MDT). Many works (Chen et al., 2024e; Kim et al., 2024) highlight the benefits of structured expertise, domain-specific knowledge, and coordinated decision-making in the AI Hospital. **Therapist Agent** provides emotional support, psychological intervention and psychotherapy (Wang et al., 2024b; Qiu and Lan, 2024; Chen et al., 2023b). **Nurse Agent** facilitates triage, basic care and patient coordination (Bao et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024b). **Medical Technician Agents** aid diagnostic procedures, ensuring accurate test results (Schmidgall et al., 2024b). **Medical students & Examiner agent** Simulate clinical training to improve medical history collection and diagnostic skills (Li et al., 2024d; Yao et al., 2024b). **Medical AI Teamwork Agents** collaborate to tackle complex AI hospital tasks beyond a single agent’s capacity. They handle information extraction, reasoning, and decision-making in disease analysis, diagnosis, patient triage, medical planning, and final decisions. **Goal-Driven Reasoning Agent** coordinates multi-step reasoning using

structured pipelines, dual-agent frameworks, and symbolic reasoning (Yu et al., 2024; Hong et al., 2024; Shi et al., 2024b). **Clinical Judge Agent** ensures AI-driven diagnoses meet accuracy, effectiveness, and guideline adherence (Johri et al., 2023; Yue et al., 2024a). **Critic Agent** refines reasoning, mitigates biases, and enhances reliability through structured feedback (Ke et al., 2024; Hong et al., 2024). **Planning Agent** decomposes tasks, optimizes workflows, and improves triage and structured conversations (Yue et al., 2024a; Shi et al., 2024a). **Decision Agent** mediates conflicting assessments and synthesizes insights for coherent, evidence-based diagnoses (Tang et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024g). **Recording Agent** logs key medical insights (Ke et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2024).

AI-Assisted Research Agents optimize new knowledge discovery, research support, and scientific review. **Research Planning Agent** plays a crucial role in structuring research tasks and ensuring efficient problem decomposition in complex domains, leveraging hierarchical decision-making and adaptive optimization to refine research strategies and enhance scientific impact (Swanson et al., 2024; Xiao et al., 2024). **Research Executor Agent** facilitates clinical research by assisting in hypothesis testing, statistical analysis, and experiment interpretation, leveraging domain-specific expertise to optimize research workflows and minimize execution failures (Swanson et al., 2024; Xiao et al., 2024). **Scientific Critic Agent** is responsible for assessing the quality and validity of AI-generated solutions, ensuring reliable decision-making in research and clinical settings (Xiao et al., 2024). **Database Agent** is designed to retrieve, manage, and integrate medical information for improved decision-making (Shi et al., 2024b).

2.2 Interaction Patterns

AI Hospital employs different interaction patterns to enhance efficiency, reliability, and decision-making. **Task-Focused Collaboration** decomposes complex medical tasks into structured sub-tasks for efficiency and consistency. Modular architectures follow predefined workflows to accomplish tasks, such as the ERRG workflow (Extract, Retrieve, Rewrite, Generate) (Li et al., 2024d). Multi-agent systems like AIPatient (Yu et al., 2024), ClinicalAgent (Yue et al., 2024a), and EHRAgent (Shi et al., 2024b) assign roles and execute tasks sequentially to enhance reasoning and decision-making. **Expert-Guided Decision-Making** en-

sures AI-driven medical decisions are clinically reliable. Multiple studies (Du et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2024e; Kim et al., 2024; Tang et al., 2023) emphasize expert integration in decision-making, research, and medical education, ensuring domain expertise and consensus validation. **Iterative Problem Optimization (IPO)** refines problem-solving through feedback loops. AI agents iteratively adjust queries (Yu et al., 2024), refine diagnostic interactions via conversational and reflection-based corrections (Du et al., 2024; Bao et al., 2024), and critique each other's reasoning (Tang et al., 2023). Programming agents iteratively enhance code accuracy (Shi et al., 2024b). **Automated Knowledge Integration (AKI)** merges diverse medical knowledge and patient data for accurate, context-aware decision-making. Techniques include knowledge-enhanced retrieval (Shi et al., 2024a), memory-based integration (Liao et al., 2024), and Directed Acyclic Graph (DAG)-based structuring (Du et al., 2024). Multi-modal approaches combine structured and unstructured EHR data, sensor inputs, and medical evidence (Yang et al., 2024a), while team-based models apply adaptive fusion (Wang et al., 2024a), confidence validation (Lu et al., 2024), and structured reasoning (Hong et al., 2024). **Role-based Coordination** assigns AI agents specific roles (e.g., physicians, therapists, or patients) to simulate medical interactions and enhance diagnosis, training, and decision-making (Du et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024b; Qiu and Lan, 2024). Multi-disciplinary AI teams integrate specialists' insights into comprehensive diagnoses (Wang et al., 2024g; Chen et al., 2024e). Systems like AgentClinic (Schmidgall et al., 2024b) and Agent Hospital (Li et al., 2024b) expand role-based AI applications to triage, reception, and follow-ups. **Multi-Round Interactive Debate** fosters structured discussions where AI agents critique, resolve disagreements, and refine conclusions (Fan et al., 2024; Li et al., 2023b; Kim et al., 2024). Approaches employ voting (Tang et al., 2023), debate strategies (Smit et al., 2023), and confidence-based stopping (Lu et al., 2024). AI-driven research teams apply debate mechanisms to synthesize findings (Swanson et al., 2024).

2.3 Tool Integration

In AI hospitals, agents use diverse tools to enhance efficiency and accuracy. For example, **Retrieval systems** ensure rapid access to medical knowledge by dynamically retrieving patient records and evidence-based guidelines, aiding both patient and

doctor agents in contextual reasoning (Du et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2024). **Knowledge graphs** structure medical knowledge into interconnected networks, enabling AI systems to navigate relationships between symptoms, treatments, and medical histories for informed decision support (Li et al., 2024d; Yu et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2024e). **Medical decision trees** provide structured diagnostic pathways, ensuring AI-driven recommendations align with established clinical guidelines and expert knowledge (Yang et al., 2024a; Li et al., 2023a). **LLM-as-KB** transforms LLMs into dynamic knowledge repositories, allowing AI to synthesize medical insights beyond static databases (Yue et al., 2024a; Frisoni et al., 2024). **Smart devices and sensor data** integration facilitate real-time health monitoring, merging wearable data with EHR insights to enhance predictive analytics and personalized care (Yang et al., 2024a; Abbasian et al., 2023). **Multi-modality processing tools** enable AI hospitals to integrate textual, visual, and sensor data, improving tasks such as radiology interpretation and decision tree-based diagnostics (Li et al., 2024d; Yang et al., 2024a; Li et al., 2024a). **Computational reasoning tools** equip AI with logical inference and code execution capabilities, supporting automated clinical research and data-driven modeling (Wang et al., 2024f; Hong et al., 2024). Finally, some **other clinical decision support tools** optimize diagnostic accuracy by leveraging external APIs, existing predictive models/systems, and structured reporting systems (Wang et al., 2024a; Li et al., 2024a). And some **other biomedical research tools** accelerate drug discovery and genomic analysis, enabling AI-powered advancements in computational biology and molecular medicine (Swanson et al., 2024; Jin et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2024).

2.4 Memory Management

AI Hospital leverages structured memory management for adaptive learning and decision-making. **Long-Term Memory (LTM)** retains knowledge across sessions, integrating internal model updates and external databases for enhanced reasoning. **Internal Memory** embedded in the model parameters serves as a foundational knowledge repository for the agent to support zero-shot and few-shot tasks. For example, Li et al. (2024d) leverages the inherent common-sense knowledge within LLMs to supplement missing information in clinical case graphs, ensuring the generation of plausible at-

tributes based on pre-existing knowledge. Wang et al. (2024e) integrates internal memory by fine-tuning ChatGPT with real patient clinical records, resulting in more accurate adverse event and drug predictions. **External Memory** supplements AI hospital systems with structured knowledge from databases, knowledge graphs, and retrieval systems while enabling real-time adaptation. **Static Storage** maintains long-term, structured knowledge, such as NIH resources for disease-specific agents (Wang et al., 2024a), CCD for patient history (Wang et al., 2024d), and structured ESI manuals (Lu et al., 2024). Medical knowledge databases, textbooks, and diagnostic guidelines serve as stable references (Yang et al., 2024a; Shi et al., 2024a; Yue et al., 2024b), while drug knowledge graphs and clinical trial registries support evidence-based decision-making (Chen et al., 2024e; Yue et al., 2024a; Liu et al., 2024). **Dynamic Updating** integrates real-time knowledge via retrieval systems and APIs, refining AI behavior with expert feedback (Louie et al., 2024), synchronizing clinical guidelines (Yang et al., 2024a), and leveraging PubMed or GitHub updates (Wang et al., 2024f). Additionally, long-term memory enhances task execution by retrieving past cases (Shi et al., 2024b; Schmidgall et al., 2024b; Bao et al., 2024), preserving user preferences like recurring health concerns for personalized responses.

Short-Term Memory (STM) and **Multi-Agent Shared Working Memory (WM)** serve complementary roles in AI hospitals and medical dialogue systems, ensuring context retention, reasoning consistency, and collaborative decision-making. STM is a temporary, agent-specific memory that maintains coherence during task execution but is cleared afterward (Liu et al., 2025). Medical dialogue systems use dialogue history, entity extraction, or summaries to mitigate forgetfulness and enhance reasoning. In contrast, WM is a globally shared memory facilitating knowledge synchronization, feedback integration, and structured reasoning across agents. It supports dynamic inference buffers, execution trace retention, and cross-agent coordination. For instance, Lu et al. (2024) updates summary reports for diagnostic consistency, while Hong et al. (2024) structures symbolic inference steps. WM also optimizes iterative decision-making (Kim et al., 2024; Xiao et al., 2024), reducing redundancy by storing shared task outcomes (Xiao et al., 2024). Feedback integration enhances refinement, as seen in expert voting (Tang et al., 2023), meta-doctor

consolidation (Wang et al., 2024g), and structured critique cycles (Swanson et al., 2024).

2.5 Reasoning Mechanisms

Direct: derives conclusions through structured logic without external feedback. **Single-path** follows a linear progression, where each step builds on the previous one, as seen in ERRG (Li et al., 2024d), cognitive conceptualization maps (Wang et al., 2024d), ClientCAST (Wang et al., 2024b), and medical diagnostic frameworks like MDA-agents (Kim et al., 2024) and expert systems (Yan et al., 2024). CoT-based approaches include Agent-Clinic (Schmidgall et al., 2024b), AI nurse simulators (Bao et al., 2024), CoT-driven coding (Wang et al., 2024f), least-to-most reasoning in clinical agents (Yue et al., 2024a), and Chain-of-Diagnosis models (Chen et al., 2024d). **Multi-path** enables parallel inference for flexible decision-making, integrating multi-agent systems like EvoPatient (Du et al., 2024), RareAgents (Chen et al., 2024e), MDAgents (Kim et al., 2024), and MedAgents (Tang et al., 2023). Other methods leverage multi-agent collaboration (Wang et al., 2024g), expert self-consistency (Li et al., 2024c), and symbolic reasoning (Wang et al., 2024a; Hong et al., 2024). Additionally, LLM planners (Liu et al., 2024) generate parallel solutions before validation, while simulated medical research meetings (Swanson et al., 2024) synthesize discussions into optimal decisions.

Feedback-Based: adjusts reasoning by integrating feedback to refine. **External Feedback** enhances AI agents by incorporating real-time data, expert input, and structured resources, enabling agents to refine their understanding through interactions and external tools (Chen et al., 2024d; Johri et al., 2023). Medical consultation systems iteratively update diagnoses through patient interactions, while decision-making agents query external resources like Phenomizer and DrugBank for real-time clinical knowledge (Li et al., 2024c). **Self Feedback** enables AI agents to refine reasoning internally by evaluating logic, correcting inconsistencies, and iteratively improving outputs (Louie et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2024). Reflection-based techniques such as Reflection CoT and self-play mechanisms further enhance AI models by structuring error analysis and collaborative discussions (Schmidgall et al., 2024b). Applications extend to code generation, drug discovery, medical research, and medical exam question generation (Wang et al., 2024f).

3 Applications

3.1 Simulating Specific Scenarios

Clinical Workflow Simulation employs multi-agent to model patient care, from consultation to diagnosis. Some works simulate the full consultation workflow, where patient, doctor, and evaluator agents interact. Liu et al. (2025) segmented consultations into four stages and identifies the weakest stage as the limiting factor, akin to Liebig’s law. Johri et al. (2023) proposed CRAFT-MD, using doctor agents interacting with structured patient agents and an automatic grading system. Li et al. (2024c) developed MEDIQ, integrating abstention strategies, rationale generation, and self-consistency to refine diagnosis. Fan et al. (2024) introduced AI Hospital, where doctor agents engage in multi-round discussions, mediated by a Central Agent to resolve disagreements. Schmidgall et al. (2024b) presented AgentClinic, a multimodal benchmark incorporating cognitive biases and incomplete information to evaluate LLM-based doctor agents. Another direction expands simulations beyond consultation to the entire patient journey. Bao et al. (2024) developed PIORS, an outpatient reception system using a Service Flow-aware Medical Scenario Simulation framework to enhance department recommendations. Li et al. (2024b) proposed Agent Hospital, a fully autonomous system covering disease onset to recovery. Its MedAgent-Zero framework enables doctor agents to refine their diagnostic accuracy via case-based learning and RAG, mirroring real-world physicians’ iterative knowledge refinement and boosting medical evaluation performance. Given the communication-centric nature of mental health care, a large body of work also focuses on **Psychological Counseling and Mental Health Interaction**, which can be viewed as a specialized form here. Examples include Roleplay-doh (Louie et al., 2024), which turns expert feedback into behavior rules; PATIENT- Ψ (Wang et al., 2024d), which incorporates CBT principles; and Chen et al. (2023b), which aligns interactions with DSM-5 criteria.

Multi-Disciplinary Medical Team Simulation replicates real-world medical teams’ collaborative processes, optimizing communication, information sharing, and decision-making for complex clinical scenarios. For rare disease, Chen et al. (2024e) introduced RareAgents, where a patient agent presents symptoms, an attending physician agent assembles an MDT, and specialists iteratively

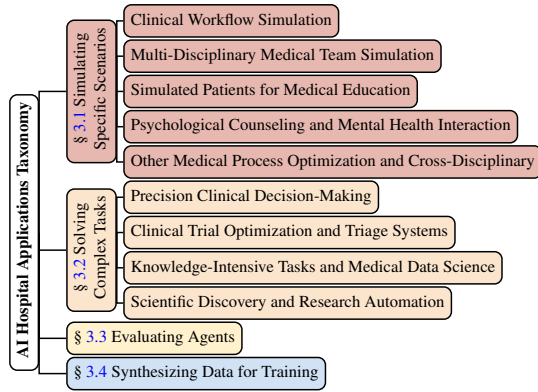


Figure 3: Taxonomy of AI hospital applications.

refine diagnoses using dynamic memory and medical toolkits. Similarly, [Kim et al. \(2024\)](#) proposed MDAgents, employing a hierarchical collaboration strategy where a single doctor handles simple cases, while MDTs, moderated by an external knowledge-integrating agent, address complex ones. [Tang et al. \(2023\)](#) introduced MEDAGENTS, structuring MDT collaboration into four phases—expert recruitment, independent analysis, collaborative consultation, and final decision-making—to enhance reasoning without training. In EHR modeling, [Wang et al. \(2024g\)](#) proposed ColaCare, where DoctorAgent processes structured EHR data with medical guidelines, while MetaAgent refines clinical decisions through iterative assessments, improving predictive modeling by integrating numerical predictions with textual reasoning.

Simulated Patients for Medical Education improve student training in communication, clinical reasoning, and diagnosis within a controlled setting. Advances in LLM-driven simulations enhance fidelity and interactivity. [Du et al. \(2024\)](#) introduced EvoPatient, a multi-agent framework where doctor-patient agents iteratively co-evolve using RAG and personality traits. [Wei et al. \(2024a\)](#) proposed MEDCO, integrating structured training, interdisciplinary collaboration, and multimodal inputs with memory and peer discussion modules. For assessment, [Mehandru et al. \(2024\)](#) proposed AI-SCE for process-focused training, while [Yao et al. \(2024b\)](#) introduced MedQA-CS with simulated student interactions and structured evaluations.

Other Medical Process Optimization and Cross-Disciplinary Simulation AI-driven methodologies have been explored for optimizing medical processes and enabling cross-disciplinary simulations. [Swanson et al. \(2024\)](#) introduced a multi-agent "Virtual Lab," where LLM-powered agents

(e.g., principal investigator, biologist, scientific critic) collaborate using biomedical tools like ESM and AlphaFold-Multimer to design nanobody treatments for SARS-CoV-2 variants, showcasing AI’s potential in accelerating interdisciplinary research. Similarly, [Williams et al. \(2023\)](#) proposed a generative AI-enhanced epidemic modeling platform, where LLM-driven agents autonomously assess health status and public health data to simulate pandemic dynamics, improving traditional agent-based modeling. These works demonstrate AI’s role in advancing scientific discovery and public health modeling through intelligent agent-based decision-making.

3.2 Solving Complex Tasks

Many AI Hospital works leverage multi-agent frameworks to enhance diagnosis, triage, research, and discovery in dynamic clinical settings.

Clinical Decision-Making: AI hospitals improve diagnostic accuracy and transparency, especially for rare or complex diseases. Systems like RareAgents ([Chen et al., 2024e](#)), MMedAgent ([Li et al., 2024a](#)), and DrHouse ([Yang et al., 2024a](#)) integrate tools, memory, and retrieval for consistent, multimodal reasoning. Others focus on interpretability: DiagnosisGPT ([Chen et al., 2024d](#)), ArgMed-Agents ([Hong et al., 2024](#)), and MedAgents ([Tang et al., 2023](#)) use structured reasoning or argumentation to reduce bias and enhance trust.

Triage and Clinical Trials: Agent-based systems like TriageAgent ([Lu et al., 2024](#)), PIORS ([Bao et al., 2024](#)), and ClinicalAgent ([Yue et al., 2024a](#)) improve emergency triage, outpatient routing, and trial matching using guideline-based retrieval and reasoning strategies.

Knowledge-Intensive Workflows: AI agents support data science tasks such as EHR analysis ([Shi et al., 2024b](#)), code generation ([Wang et al., 2024f](#)), fact-checking ([Yue et al., 2024b](#)), and question generation ([Yao et al., 2024a](#)), streamlining clinical research.

Scientific Discovery: Multi-agent labs like Virtual-Lab ([Swanson et al., 2024](#)), CellAgent ([Xiao et al., 2024](#)), and DrugAgent ([Liu et al., 2024](#)) automate biomedical discovery, integrating reasoning agents with domain tools to accelerate hypothesis generation, molecular analysis, and drug development.

3.3 Evaluating Agents

AI hospital evaluations are shifting from static benchmarks to interactive, multi-agent simulations

that capture real-time reasoning, collaboration, and patient engagement (Johri et al., 2023; Schmidgall et al., 2024b; Li et al., 2024c). Recent work emphasizes state-aware evaluation, using patient simulators like SAPS (Liao et al., 2024) and role-play settings (Louie et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024b) to test an agent’s adaptability and coherence across turns. Multi-agent frameworks such as AI Hospital (Fan et al., 2024) and ClinicalLab (Yan et al., 2024) assess inter-agent collaboration, dispute resolution, and cross-department knowledge exchange. Multimodal evaluation is also gaining traction: MMedAgent (Li et al., 2024a) combines imaging and text-based reasoning, while others assess tool-assisted clinical calculations (Khandekar et al., 2024). Finally, OSCE-style benchmarks like MedQA-CS (Yao et al., 2024b), OSCEBot (Pereira et al., 2023), and AI-SCE (Mehandru et al., 2024) offer comprehensive, scenario-based evaluations of real-world clinical skills.

3.4 Synthesizing Data for Training

Synthetic data generation in AI hospitals supports realistic, privacy-preserving training for medical LLMs. Multi-agent co-evolution frameworks (Du et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024b) simulate diagnostic dialogues, refine agent reasoning, and improve generalization to benchmarks. NoteChat (Wang et al., 2023a) transforms clinical notes into role-played, polished conversations via planning, simulation, and feedback. AMIE (Tu et al., 2024) uses self-play and auto-feedback to enhance history-taking and reasoning. These methods reduce annotation costs while maintaining clinical validity, enabling scalable training for downstream applications.

4 Key Challenges & Future Directions

¹**Agent Roles** Recontextualizing NLP models as clinical agents demands role-consistent behaviors reflecting real-world complexity. Doctor agents must demonstrate diverse diagnostic reasoning, clinical decision-making, and personalized communication styles, while patient agents require nuanced disclosure of medical histories influenced by social determinants of health. Techniques like memory modules, inverse reinforcement learning, and dynamic knowledge graphs will be essential to capture these complexities. A critical interdisciplinary challenge is integrating social, psychological,

and behavioral theories into NLP frameworks, enhancing realism, fairness, and patient diversity in clinical simulations.

Interaction Patterns The design of interaction patterns in multi-agent healthcare remains challenging, particularly regarding meaningful human participation. Current studies typically limit human roles to evaluation, rather than interactive partners, restricting NLP’s practical impact. A key direction is exploring hybrid human-AI interaction models, clearly distinguishing human contributions from autonomous agent behaviors. Techniques from fields such as game theory, human-computer interaction, and cognitive science could enrich NLP’s methods for modeling realistic and beneficial human-agent collaboration.

Tool Integration While current works integrate diverse tools, systematic evaluation frameworks remain underdeveloped, limiting assessment of their true interdisciplinary impact. Future research should move beyond static NLP benchmarks, leveraging AI hospital ecosystems as dynamic environments to rigorously evaluate how well integrated tools improve real clinical workflows and outcomes. Interdisciplinary validation frameworks must assess tools’ contributions to patient safety, decision quality, and healthcare accessibility.

Memory Management remains critical for integrating NLP within longitudinal patient care. While current models rely on static EHRs and retrieval-augmented generation, accurately capturing temporal disease progression and dynamic patient profiles requires advanced interdisciplinary solutions. Temporal knowledge graphs and dynamic memory retrieval methods should be explored to align NLP outputs with patient comprehension levels, enabling more personalized, adaptive, and clinically relevant interactions.

Reasoning Mechanisms Most NLP reasoning approaches remain limited to single-path inference, insufficient for complex, uncertain clinical scenarios. Future research should integrate adaptive reasoning frameworks combining single-path, multi-hop, and probabilistic approaches, leveraging insights from clinical reasoning literature. Bayesian inference, Markov Decision Processes (MDPs), and decision-theoretic methods from cognitive science and medicine could enhance NLP agents’ ability to handle clinical uncertainty, improve safety, and support rigorous interdisciplinary evaluations of clinical reasoning.

Simulating Specific Scenario & Solving Com-

¹Due to space limitations, we include detailed discussions and Table 2 and 3 for this section in Appendix A.

plex Tasks AI hospital simulations must address challenges in modeling realistic clinical scenarios extending beyond acute patient visits, including chronic disease management and public health emergencies. Interdisciplinary NLP research must incorporate socio-behavioral dynamics and broader environmental contexts to accurately represent real-world complexity. Ensuring robustness in multi-agent architectures also requires addressing technical bottlenecks such as hallucinations, biases, and computational scalability. Enhanced error-handling, uncertainty quantification, and human expert oversight are critical for meaningful interdisciplinary deployment in healthcare.

Evaluating Agents Evaluating NLP-driven clinical agents requires shifting from accuracy-focused metrics toward interdisciplinary frameworks aligning with real-world medical practice. Future evaluations should incorporate measures reflecting clinical utility, usability, patient-centered outcomes, and cost-effectiveness, leveraging feedback loops involving clinicians and patients. Balancing inference efficiency and resource costs, as well as integrating medical-specific domain knowledge with general-purpose LLM capabilities, represents an interdisciplinary evaluation challenge critical to impactful real-world deployment.

Synthesizing Data for Training Synthesizing realistic, unbiased, and privacy-compliant data remains challenging for training NLP-driven medical agents. While reinforcement learning and self-play approaches offer promise, applying them in clinical contexts faces limitations from data scarcity and ethical concerns. Future interdisciplinary directions include dynamic synthetic data generation through multi-agent collaboration, multimodal integration, and fairness-driven evaluation metrics. Interdisciplinary collaboration involving domain experts, ethicists, and clinicians is essential for generating synthetic data capable of reliably informing real-world clinical practice.

Governance, Ethics, and the Roles of AI Researchers and Medical Practitioners The deployment of AI hospital systems introduces significant governance and ethical challenges related to transparency, responsibility allocation, security, and equitable healthcare access. As these systems increasingly influence medical decision-making, establishing clear accountability frameworks for errors or adverse outcomes becomes critical. In particular, implicit biases in resource allocation—reflected in training data or agent behavior—may exacerbate

social inequalities if left unaddressed. A robust governance framework must ensure compliance with ethical standards, protect patient privacy, and support interdisciplinary oversight.

Transparent version control and model evolution tracking are necessary to monitor changes in behavior, mitigate unintended consequences, and ensure reproducibility across deployments. Addressing these challenges will require collaboration among NLP researchers, clinicians, ethicists, and policymakers, as well as international cooperation to establish consistent norms and regulations.

From the perspective of AI&NLP researchers, a key challenge lies in fully leveraging the AI hospital as a testbed to iteratively address the technical, behavioral, and evaluation challenges discussed throughout Section 4. This includes simulating failures, validating safety interventions, and aligning agent behaviors with domain expectations—not only for technical excellence but for responsible impact. For medical practitioners, the challenge is to integrate AI systems into clinical practice in a way that improves equity and efficiency without increasing burden or disrupting workflows. AI hospitals must be designed not to replace, but to assist human judgment—enhancing clinician decision-making through trustworthy collaboration. This requires deep involvement of healthcare professionals throughout the system design and testing process. By embedding clinical expertise into development, AI hospitals can be grounded in real-world needs, bridging the gap between language-based AI systems and practical, ethical medical applications.

5 Conclusion

As large language models increasingly take on agentic roles, AI hospitals provide a compelling framework for reimagining NLP in complex, high-stakes domains like healthcare. By simulating multi-agent clinical workflows and enabling dynamic, role-based evaluation, these systems move beyond static benchmarks—offering new ways to assess reasoning, collaboration, and safety in real-world contexts. More broadly, AI hospitals illustrate how recontextualizing NLP systems within interdisciplinary environments can surface both limitations and opportunities. They challenge us to bridge linguistic modeling with clinical reasoning, decision-making under uncertainty, and societal considerations such as fairness, trust, and impact.

6 Limitations

Due to space constraints, we can only provide a concise summary of each method rather than an exhaustive technical discussion. Even though we have included a more detailed discussion in the appendix, readers may still need to refer to original papers and code repositories for full implementation details. Our literature review mainly covers *ACL, NeurIPS, ICLR, ICML, AAAI, select medical journals, and preprints (arXiv, medRxiv, bioRxiv), so some relevant work may be overlooked. Given the field’s rapid evolution, we remain committed to updating our perspectives and incorporating new advancements.

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| ID | Paper Title | Venue | Code/Data | Study |
|----|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Exploring the Inquiry-Diagnosis Relationship with Advanced Patient Simulators | arXiv | link | (Liu et al., 2025) |
| 2 | Leveraging Large Language Model as Simulated Patients for Clinical Education | arXiv | No | (Li et al., 2024d) |
| 3 | A GPT-Powered Chatbot as a Simulated Patient to Practice History Taking | JMIR Med Edu | No | (Holderried et al., 2024) |
| 4 | Designing and building OSCEBot @ for virtual OSCE – Performance evaluation | Med Edu Online | No | (Pereira et al., 2023) |
| 5 | Roleplay-doh: Enabling domain-experts to create LLM-simulated patients | EMNLP24 | link | (Louie et al., 2024) |
| 6 | AlPatient: Simulating Patients with EHRs and LLM Powered Agentic Workflow | arXiv | link | (Yu et al., 2024) |
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| 8 | PATIENT-Ψ: Using Large Language Models to Simulate Patients for Training Mental Health Professionals | EMNLP24 | link | (Wang et al., 2024d) |
| 9 | Towards a Client-Centered Assessment of LLM Therapists by Client Simulation | arXiv | link | (Wang et al., 2024b) |
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| 22 | PIORS: Personalized Intelligent Outpatient Reception Using Multi-Agents | arXiv | link | (Bao et al., 2024) |
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| 24 | The Virtual Lab: AI Agents Design New SARS-CoV-2 Nanobodies | BioRxiv | link | (Swanson et al., 2024) |
| 25 | MEDCO: Medical Education Copilots Using Multi-Agent Framework | arXiv | No | (Wei et al., 2024a) |
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| 29 | Enhancing Clinical Trial Patient Matching via Multi-Agent Knowledge Augmentation | arXiv | No | (Shi et al., 2024a) |
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| 31 | Synergistic Multi-Agent Framework with Trajectory Learning | AAAI25 | link | (Yue et al., 2024b) |
| 32 | Empowering Biomedical Discovery with AI Agents | Cell | No | (Gao et al., 2024) |
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| 35 | BioKGBench: A Knowledge Graph Benchmark | arXiv | link | (Lin et al., 2024) |
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| 37 | HeCiX: Integrating Knowledge Graphs and LLMs for Biomedical Research | arXiv | No | (Kulkarni et al., 2024) |
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| 42 | Improving Retrieval-Augmented Generation in Medicine with Iterative Follow-up Questions | arXiv | link | (Xiong et al., 2024b) |
| 43 | Almanac — Retrieval-Augmented Language Models for Clinical Medicine | NEJM AI | link | (Zakka et al., 2024) |
| 44 | Augmenting Black-box LLMs with Medical Textbooks for Biomedical QA | EMNLP Findings 2024 | link | (Wang et al., 2023b) |
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| 46 | AgentMD: Empowering Language Agents for Risk Prediction | arXiv | link | (Jin et al., 2024) |
| 47 | MedCalc-Bench: Evaluating LLMs for Medical Calculations | NeurIPS 2024 | link | (Khandekar et al., 2024) |
| 48 | Augmenting ChatGPT with Clinician-Informed Tools for Medical Calculations | medRxiv | No | (Goodell et al., 2023) |
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| 50 | EHRAgent: Code-Empowered LLMs for Few-shot Complex Tabular Reasoning | EMNLP 2024 | link | (Shi et al., 2024b) |
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| 54 | GPT-agents Based on Medical Guidelines for Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation | Scientific Reports | No | (Li et al., 2024e) |
| 55 | CellAgent: An LLM-driven Multi-Agent Framework for Automated Single-cell Data Analysis | arXiv | No | (Xiao et al., 2024) |
| 56 | DrugAgent: Automating AI-Aided Drug Discovery via LLM Multi-Agent Collaboration | arXiv | No | (Liu et al., 2024) |
| 57 | Agent Hospital: A Simulacrum of Hospital with Evolvable Medical Agents | arXiv | No | (Li et al., 2024b) |
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| 59 | ClinicalLab: Aligning Agents for Multi-Departmental Clinical Diagnostics | arXiv | link | (Yan et al., 2024) |
| 60 | LLM-empowered Chatbots for Psychiatrist and Patient Simulation | arXiv | No | (Chen et al., 2023b) |
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| 62 | Epidemic Modeling with Generative Agents | arXiv | link | (Williams et al., 2023) |
| 63 | NoteChat: A Dataset of Synthetic Patient-Physician Conversations | ACL 2024 Findings | link | (Wang et al., 2023a) |
| 64 | Evaluating Large Language Models as Agents in the Clinic | npj Digital Medicine | No | (Mehandru et al., 2024) |
| 65 | MedQA-CS: Benchmarking LLMs Clinical Skills Using an AI-SCE Framework | arXiv | link | (Yao et al., 2024b) |
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| 70 | MEDAIDE: Towards an Omni Medical Aide via Specialized LLM-based Multi-Agent Collaboration | Preprint | No | (Wei et al., 2024b) |
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| Key Challenges | Future Research Directions |
|---|--|
| § 4 Profile/Roles | |
| <p>1. Role Consistency: Ensuring that doctor and patient agents exhibit behavior consistent with their roles across different contexts, such as doctors demonstrating diverse diagnostic styles and decision-making approaches, while patients dynamically adjust their information disclosure strategies based on consultation stages.</p> <p>2. Modeling Information Asymmetry: Simulating real-world information asymmetry, where patients may selectively disclose information due to privacy or psychological factors, while doctors must make decisions with limited information.</p> <p>3. Inverse Reinforcement Learning (IRL) for Patient Decision-Making: Real patients' behaviors are not driven by fixed reward functions. Using IRL to learn patient decision patterns (e.g., healthcare-seeking timing, treatment adherence) can enhance patient agent realism.</p> <p>4. Patient Population Diversity: Current patient agents may be overly homogeneous. Integrating social determinants of health (SDOH), such as housing, economic status, and educational background, can enhance diversity, ensuring system fairness and generalizability.</p> | <p>1. Enhancing Role-Playing and Personalization Techniques: Utilizing short-term memory modules, interview-driven personality modeling, and expert feedback optimization to make agent behavior more aligned with real-world medical scenarios.</p> <p>2. Modeling Patient Behavior with Uncertainty: Introducing behavior patterns like avoidance of negative diagnoses and risk perception adjustments to better simulate patient decision-making using heuristic methods and utility functions.</p> <p>3. Using IRL to Improve Patient Agent Realism: Learning real patients' decision trajectories to enable AI agents to better simulate patient decision-making across different contexts, thereby improving medical simulations.</p> <p>4. Building More Representative Patient Agents: Incorporating factors such as SDOH to ensure AI hospital systems accurately reflect the healthcare behaviors of diverse populations, improving applicability in medical training and patient education.</p> |
| § 4 Interaction Patterns | |
| <p>1. Defining Human Roles: Current AI hospital systems primarily view AI agents as assistive tools, without clarifying whether humans should act as observers, active participants, or even replace certain AI agent functions.</p> <p>2. Strategic Decision-Making and Information Uncertainty Modeling: Existing interaction models rely mainly on end-to-end LLM predictions, lacking explicit mathematical modeling, making it difficult to capture inherent information asymmetry in medical scenarios.</p> <p>3. Collaboration and Competition Among Multi-Agent Systems: Long-term interactions between LLM agents remain underexplored. Doctor and patient agents may have competitive relationships in certain tasks (zero-sum games) but are mostly cooperative (cooperative games).</p> <p>4. Modeling Medical Uncertainty: Both patient and doctor agents may lack complete information during diagnosis. Optimizing interaction strategies in highly uncertain environments remains a challenge.</p> | <p>1. Incorporating Human Interaction for Evaluation and Enhancement: Embedding real humans in AI hospital systems to explore the differentiation between AI agents and humans (Turing-like tests) and assess optimal human-AI collaboration models.</p> <p>2. Optimizing AI Agent Interaction via Game Theory: Using methods such as Stackelberg games, Bayesian games, and informational games to model AI hospital systems, improving decision-making under information asymmetry.</p> <p>3. Enhancing Long-Term Evolution Mechanisms Among AI Agents: Applying evolutionary game theory to optimize strategies over time, such as patient agents learning effective symptom disclosure and doctor agents refining diagnostic questioning techniques.</p> <p>4. Using Bayesian Inference to Improve Medical Decision-Making: Developing Bayesian game-based diagnostic strategies that allow doctor agents to optimize questioning methods under uncertainty, while patient agents dynamically adjust responses based on perception, improving realism and medical education value.</p> |
| § 4 Tools | |
| <p>1. Static Integration of Tools: Current AI hospital systems treat tools as static components, lacking systematic evaluation methods to assess their actual effectiveness in medical environments.</p> <p>2. Uncertainty in Tool Effectiveness: For instance, LLM-as-KB has shown superiority over traditional RAG in specific benchmarks, but its advantages in real-world medical applications remain unclear.</p> <p>3. Lack of Real-World Impact-Based Evaluation Frameworks: Existing tool evaluations rely primarily on standardized quantitative metrics, whereas clinical applications should assess tools based on their impact on agent interactions and patient health outcomes.</p> | <p>1. Dynamic Tool Integration and Adaptive Optimization: Exploring how AI hospital system tools can dynamically adapt to different tasks and contexts rather than being statically invoked, enhancing applicability in complex medical decision-making.</p> <p>2. Validating Tool Performance in Real Medical Tasks: Moving beyond traditional benchmarks to establish evaluation frameworks specific to AI hospital systems, measuring tool effectiveness in supporting doctor decision-making and improving patient education.</p> <p>3. Analyzing the Impact of Tools on Agent Interactions and Medical Outcomes: Developing novel evaluation metrics to assess how tools influence doctor-patient agent collaboration efficiency, information accuracy, and overall decision-making quality.</p> |
| § 4 Memory | |
| <p>1. Limitations of Static EHR: Current methods treat EHRs as static knowledge bases, neglecting the temporal dependencies of disease progression, making it difficult to reflect patients' long-term health conditions comprehensively.</p> <p>2. Insufficient Dynamic Memory Access Mechanisms: Existing memory modules lack effective triggering mechanisms, making it difficult to dynamically adjust information storage and retrieval based on patient health literacy or behavioral feedback.</p> <p>3. Lack of Patient Behavior Modeling: Current systems fail to simulate long-term patient health behavior changes, such as how treatment adherence evolves in chronic disease management, making it challenging for doctor agents to adapt their interaction strategies.</p> | <p>1. Time-Series Health Data Modeling: Constructing temporal graphs to encode patient history, medication usage, and consultation records, enabling LLM agents to identify key disease progression points and optimize medical interactions.</p> <p>2. Intelligent Memory Access Optimization: Introducing adjustable access control mechanisms, such as health literacy-based reading difficulty detection, ensuring that patient agents receive medical information at an appropriate comprehension level.</p> <p>3. Behavioral Adaptive Memory Modules: Leveraging habit-forming models to simulate patients transitioning from doctor dependence to autonomous health management, allowing AI agents to provide personalized medical support at different stages.</p> |
| § 4 Reasoning Patterns | |
| <p>1. Limitations of Single Reasoning Paths: Existing methods primarily rely on direct step-by-step reasoning, which struggles to handle the complexity and dynamic nature of real-world medical environments.</p> <p>2. Insufficient Handling of Uncertainty: Doctor and patient agents often lack complete information during interactions, and current AI reasoning frameworks struggle to flexibly adjust decisions, increasing the likelihood of errors or hallucinations.</p> <p>3. Lack of Dynamic Reasoning Mechanisms: AI agents in multi-agent interactions still operate with independent reasoning, lacking the ability to dynamically adjust decisions based on ongoing interactions, limiting their performance in complex medical tasks.</p> | <p>1. Expanding Uncertainty Modeling Methods: Incorporating Bayesian inference to allow AI agents to adjust reasoning paths through probabilistic updates rather than relying solely on deterministic reasoning.</p> <p>2. Introducing Time-Series Decision Models: Utilizing Markov Decision Processes (MDP) to optimize AI agents' decision-making in patient interactions, enabling dynamic diagnostic strategies based on state changes.</p> <p>3. Using POMDPs for Partially Observable Environments: Applying Partially Observable Markov Decision Processes (POMDPs) to help AI agents make more reasonable inferences when full patient history is unavailable, such as prompting clarifying questions instead of making premature conclusions.</p> <p>4. Integrating Multi-Agent Collaborative Reasoning: Developing new reasoning mechanisms that enable different AI agents to dynamically adjust their decisions based on shared information, improving the intelligence and adaptability of the overall medical system.</p> |

Table 2: Key Challenges and Future Directions for different core components in AI Hospital.

| Key Challenges | Future Research Directions |
|--|--|
| § 4 Simulating Specific Scenarios & Solving Complex Tasks | |
| <p>1. Limitations in Medical Simulations: Current systems focus primarily on patient consultation stages, lacking comprehensive simulations of preoperative preparation, postoperative recovery, and chronic disease management, reducing real-world applicability.</p> <p>2. Influence of External Environmental Factors: Public health events (e.g., COVID-19) can alter hospital operations and patient behaviors, but existing systems lack adaptability to unexpected events, limiting their generalization capabilities.</p> <p>3. Insufficient Social Cognition Modeling: Patient decision-making is often influenced by social dynamics, peer influence, and observational learning, yet current AI agents lack the ability to simulate these behaviors, reducing their effectiveness in health education and disease management.</p> <p>4. System Robustness Issues: Multi-agent architectures may lead to hallucination generation, bias accumulation, and difficulties in handling long-form interactions, where frequent interactions amplify errors, decreasing overall system reliability.</p> <p>5. Inadequate Risk Management: Existing systems struggle to handle long-tail cases, rare diseases, or adversarial attacks, where error accumulation may lead to misdiagnosis or resource waste, requiring improved safety mechanisms.</p> | <p>1. Expanding Coverage of Medical Scenarios: Incorporating long-term health management, postoperative recovery, and chronic disease monitoring modules into AI hospital systems to improve simulation comprehensiveness and real-world adaptability.</p> <p>2. Enhancing Adaptability to External Events: Developing dynamic behavior adjustment and memory mechanisms to enable AI agents to respond effectively to public health crises or emergency medical situations, improving system robustness.</p> <p>3. Incorporating Social Cognition Theories: Designing patient agents with observational learning mechanisms to simulate the impact of social influences on medical decision-making and optimizing AI interaction in online patient communities and medical forums.</p> <p>4. Optimizing Multi-Agent Collaboration Frameworks: Reducing error propagation by developing fair benchmarking tests and optimization algorithms to ensure multi-agent systems outperform single-agent or standalone LLMs in complex tasks.</p> <p>5. Introducing Uncertainty Quantification and Safety Protocols: Implementing safety triggers (e.g., expert intervention, anomaly detection) in high-risk scenarios and using extreme-case simulations to enhance system reliability in rare disease cases.</p> |
| § 4 Evaluating Agents | |
| <p>1. Limitations of Existing Evaluation Methods: Current evaluation frameworks focus primarily on task accuracy, traditional generation metrics, or LLM-as-Judge assessments, lacking alignment with real-world medical environments where doctors rely on patient feedback and peer reviews.</p> <p>2. Insufficient Consideration of Computational Costs and Efficiency: High performance in multi-agent AI hospital systems may partially depend on increased computational resources, but no standardized cost-performance trade-off analysis framework currently exists, making evaluations unrealistic.</p> <p>3. Lack of Fair Benchmarking Tests: Inconsistent test datasets, varying computational resource allocation, and vague task definitions hinder cross-system comparisons, reducing the reliability of evaluation results.</p> <p>4. Limitations of Medical LLMs in Agent-Based Tasks: While medical-specific LLMs (e.g., Med-PaLM2, DoctorGLM) possess superior medical knowledge, their intelligent behavior in AI hospital environments remains weak, often relegating them to tools rather than autonomous agents.</p> | <p>1. Developing More Realistic Agent Evaluation Frameworks: Incorporating social evaluation mechanisms (e.g., patient feedback, peer ratings, interaction quality analysis) to simulate how doctors are assessed in real-world environments, making evaluations more aligned with medical practice.</p> <p>2. Optimizing Computational Cost Assessment: Creating weighted cost models that analyze trade-offs between computational resource consumption, inference time, and performance gains, reducing over-reliance on large models in multi-agent AI hospital systems.</p> <p>3. Establishing Fair Multi-Agent Benchmark Tests: Standardizing test datasets, computational resources, and task definitions to ensure fair and reliable evaluations between multi-agent and single-agent systems, improving reproducibility in research.</p> <p>4. Enhancing Medical LLMs' Agent Capabilities: Investigating how to retain intelligent agent capabilities in medical-specific LLMs, such as optimizing autonomous decision-making and interaction strategies to enable them to perform complex tasks in multi-agent environments.</p> <p>5. Developing Evaluation Standards Beyond Medical Exams: Moving beyond medical exam-based evaluations to build broader clinical task benchmarks covering medical reasoning, interaction ability, and real-world applications for a more comprehensive performance assessment.</p> |
| § 4 Synthesizing Data for Training | |
| <p>1. Limitations of RL in Medical Environments: AI hospitals have not been fully utilized as reinforcement learning (RL) environments, and real-world medical data scarcity and ethical constraints make it difficult to design appropriate training environments and reward mechanisms.</p> <p>2. Lack of Diversity and Fairness in Synthetic Data: Current synthetic data generation heavily relies on manual rules, failing to comprehensively simulate real-world medical scenarios. Long-term self-training may lead to data homogeneity and mode collapse, reducing model generalizability.</p> <p>3. Absence of Standardized and Shareable Training Data: Existing training environments are relatively isolated, making it difficult for different AI hospital systems to share synthetic data, limiting model portability and cross-system applicability.</p> | <p>1. Utilizing AI Hospitals as RL Training Environments: Designing reward mechanisms based on patient simulation and doctor decision-making, enabling AI agents to optimize medical decision-making through interactive learning, such as improving post-surgery care interventions.</p> <p>2. Enhancing the Dynamism and Multimodal Nature of Synthetic Data: Incorporating multi-agent collaboration to generate synthetic data that more closely mirrors real-world conditions while integrating text, images, and speech to improve data expressiveness.</p> <p>3. Developing Data Quality Assessment and Bias Detection Mechanisms: Creating automated data evaluation tools to detect and correct biases and errors in synthetic data, ensuring that it enhances AI agent capabilities without introducing unfairness.</p> <p>4. Establishing Standardized and Shareable Synthetic Data Frameworks: Developing unified data standards and benchmarks to facilitate synthetic data sharing across AI hospital systems, improving model stability and portability.</p> |
| § 4 Governance, Ethics, and the Roles of AI Researchers and Medical Practitioners | |
| <p>1. Accountability and Transparency: As AI hospital systems play a growing role in medical decision-making, a major ethical concern is how to define accountability for errors made by AI agents while ensuring system transparency and traceability.</p> <p>2. Bias and Its Impact on Healthcare Equity: Medical AI systems may introduce implicit biases in resource allocation, exacerbating social inequalities. A unified governance framework is lacking to regulate fairness, safety, and privacy protection.</p> <p>3. Challenges in Clinical Integration of AI Hospital Systems: AI is still difficult to seamlessly integrate into doctors' workflows. Healthcare professionals may perceive AI as an additional burden rather than a genuinely useful clinical support tool.</p> <p>4. Lack of Interdisciplinary Collaboration: There remains a gap between AI research and medical practice. Limited involvement of physicians and healthcare professionals in AI development results in systems that fail to effectively address real-world medical needs.</p> | <p>1. Establishing Governance Frameworks for AI Hospital Systems: Implementing human oversight mechanisms to monitor critical decisions, introducing transparent version management to ensure system updates are traceable, and promoting international collaboration to develop unified AI governance standards in healthcare.</p> <p>2. Enhancing Fairness and Explainability in AI Hospital Systems: Developing fairness evaluation and bias correction mechanisms to ensure equitable resource allocation and prevent AI from reinforcing biases in medical decision-making.</p> <p>3. Seamless Integration of AI into Clinical Workflows: Designing AI systems that align with doctors' workflows, ensuring they serve as assistive tools rather than additional burdens, and developing user interfaces that meet clinical needs.</p> <p>4. Bridging AI Research and Medical Practice: Encouraging active participation of physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals in AI development and evaluation to ensure AI hospital systems effectively address clinical challenges and improve the synergy between AI research and real-world healthcare applications.</p> <p>5. Exploring High-Fidelity Clinical Simulation Environments: Utilizing AI hospital systems to create realistic medical training environments that enhance AI agents' autonomous learning capabilities, optimizing their performance in medical education, patient education, and long-term self-learning.</p> |

Table 3: Key Challenges and Future Directions for different applications in AI Hospital.

A Key Challenges and Future Directions

Agent Roles In AI hospitals, different agents should exhibit behavioral patterns consistent with their designated roles to enhance the realism and practicality of medical simulations in different situations. Some work has mentioned and tried to improve this in their scenarios, but discussion and evaluation of this in more scenarios is necessary and needs to be more unified. For example, Doctor agents should exhibit variations in diagnostic styles, communication methods, and decision-making processes, even when based on the same underlying model (Kim et al., 2024). Patient agents must dynamically adjust their responses across different stages, ensuring that they gradually reveal medical history during consultations rather than disclosing everything at once (Wang et al., 2023a). Subsequent work may consider better integrating STM/LTM/WM modules to maintain contextual coherence (Zhang et al., 2023). At the same time, recent advancements in role-playing (Chen et al., 2024a) and personalization (Chen et al., 2024a,c; Zhang et al., 2024) methods in the general NLP domain, such as interview-driven persona modeling (Park et al., 2024) and expert feedback-based refinements (Louie et al., 2024), can be leveraged to improve agent behavior.

Another key aspect is managing information asymmetry, a fundamental characteristic of real-world medical conversations (Ariss, 2009; Greco, 2020). Doctor agents seek comprehensive patient information, whereas patient agents may selectively withhold certain details due to privacy concerns or psychological barriers (Gill and Maynard, 2006). Modeling patient responses using hedging language can better reflect real-world uncertainty, and employing utility functions can capture how patients weigh different trade-offs, such as balancing disclosure of medical history versus preserving personal comfort (Lehtinen, 2013). Additionally, patients tend to avoid negative diagnoses and adjust responses based on perceived risk, behaving more conservatively when severe illnesses are a concern. These behavioral tendencies should be embedded into AI agents to enhance realism.

Inverse reinforcement learning (IRL) (Chadi and Mousannif, 2022) is another promising approach for improving the decision-making of patient and doctor agents. Some work uses a small predefined action space to better control agents' behavior and facilitate optimization. However, since patients in

the real world do not follow a predefined reward function, IRL can be used to infer their underlying decision-making processes and other unconsidered actions. This enables AI agents to learn patterns, such as when patients decide to seek medical attention, comply with prescribed treatments, or respond to doctor recommendations (Snoswell et al., 2024). Training doctor and patient agents to align with observed human decision-making trajectories will significantly improve their realism in medical simulations and further improve the generalizability of these methods in the real world.

Finally, ensuring the diversity of patient agents is another key challenge, as homogeneous behaviors among agents can limit the robustness of evaluation and data synthesis (Yu et al., 2024; Bakkum et al., 2024). To address this issue, demographic attributes should be supplemented with other factors, such as social determinants of health (SDOH) (Ong et al., 2024). Additionally, some studies have attempted to extract information from actual clinical notes to construct agent profiles or memories, which to some extent increases diversity. However, in the real world, a patient's information is much more extensive, whereas clinical notes only capture a small portion. This makes it more challenging to reconstruct a patient agent with sufficient informational depth based on the compressed representation in clinical notes. While some approaches have leveraged LLMs' commonsense reasoning capabilities and knowledge graphs to alleviate this problem, more in-depth exploration is needed to effectively reconstruct patient agents with sufficient informational depth based on clinical notes. These enhancements will enable the AI hospital to reflect diverse patient populations more accurately, thereby improving the generalizability and fairness of AI applications in healthcare.

Interaction Patterns The interaction patterns within multi-agent AI hospital systems remain largely undefined, particularly regarding the roles, behaviors, and interactions of humans within these systems. Currently, most existing studies do not explore the scenario where humans are directly embedded in the system, but rather humans (whether experts or ordinary people) are just observers, evaluators, or provide some external feedback. A fundamental question is whether humans should only act as observers or actively participate as participants, replacing or supplementing certain AI agents. If participation is required, how can a unified framework to guide human identity and participation pat-

terns in different scenarios be more conveniently and appropriately defined? In addition, integrating real human interactions into AI hospital systems could open new research directions, such as evaluating whether humans can accurately distinguish between AI agents and other human participants during collaboration. This approach aligns with the Turing test concept and may redefine how AI Hospital is assessed and applied in medical contexts. Additionally, incorporating strategic decision-making and modeling uncertainty into the AI hospital can enhance system intelligence (Balogh et al., 2015; Dhawale et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2024b). Current approaches rely on end-to-end LLM predictions without explicit mathematical modeling. By leveraging some methodologies like game theory (Blake and Carroll, 2016; Sun et al., 2025; Djulbegovic et al., 2015; Glycopantis and Stavropoulou, 2018), we can better model asymmetric information challenges in medical interactions. For instance, doctor-patient interactions can be framed as zero-sum games (e.g., patients withholding symptoms to test diagnostic ability) or cooperative games (e.g., Nash Bargaining for optimized questioning). Multi-agent systems can employ Stackelberg games (Gerstgrasser and Parkes, 2023) to optimize information exchange, with doctor agents guiding patient agents toward informative disclosures. Evolutionary game theory (Bloembergen et al., 2015) may enable agents to refine their strategies over time. Bayesian games may model medical uncertainty, allowing doctor agents to use Bayesian inference to refine questioning strategies while patient agents adjust responses based on perceived health status (Verma et al., 2019; Chatzimichail and Hatjimichail, 2023).

Tool Integration In the current AI hospital, tools are often treated as static utilities. Most works directly integrate them without systematically evaluating and adapting their effectiveness within different scenarios (Wang et al., 2024c). A key challenge for the future is how to leverage the AI Hospital—an environment that closely resembles the real world—to better evaluate and validate new tools and determine whether they are truly effective rather than relying on traditional static benchmarks and flawed evaluation metrics. For example, while new tools such as domain-specific RAG (Xiong et al., 2024a,b, 2025; Zakka et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023b; Li et al., 2024e), GraphRAG (Lin et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2024; Kulkarni et al., 2024; Matsumoto et al., 2024; Khalid et al., 2024; Gilbert

et al., 2024), and LLM-as-KB (Frisoni et al., 2024) always demonstrated their advantages over previous methods on certain benchmark datasets, it remains unclear whether these advantages translate effectively into AI hospital agents or real-world users. In a real clinical setting, the success of a tool is not solely measured by standard benchmark performance but also by its ability to support different agents in providing more reliable and interpretable assistance to both clinicians and patients. Therefore, a crucial future direction is establishing the AI Hospital as a more unified and robust evaluation framework that goes beyond traditional quantitative metrics and instead assesses tools based on their real-world impact on agent interactions and patient outcomes.

Memory Management Existing research largely relies on static EHRs as memory to represent patients, often utilizing RAG or GraphRAG-based methods (Yu et al., 2024) to retrieve relevant background information to support patient agents to generate appropriate and factual responses. While this approach enables a certain level of personalization, it still faces significant challenges, particularly in comprehensively and dynamically representing a patient’s longitudinal EHR and optimizing memory access mechanisms (Xie et al., 2022). One million-dollar question is how to accurately represent a patient’s long-term health information. Current methods often treat EHRs as static knowledge bases, overlooking the temporal dependencies in disease progression and medical decision-making. Future research can explore constructing temporal graphs (Rasmussen et al., 2025) to encode a patient’s medical history, medication usage, and visit records in a time-series format, allowing LLM agents to identify critical transition points in disease progression and adjust their interaction strategies accordingly (Chen et al., 2024b). For example, in chronic disease management, patient agents may not immediately adhere to a doctor’s recommendations but instead undergo a habit-forming process where they gradually adjust their health behaviors. Therefore, the memory module must be able to model a patient’s evolving adherence to long-term medical advice and dynamically adapt the way and frequency in which doctor agents provide information. Similarly, LLM agents can leverage habit formation models to simulate how long-term patients gradually adapt and modify their health behaviors (Singh et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2022). For instance, some patients may rely heavily on doctor

agents for guidance in the early stages of a disease, but as they become more familiar with disease management, they may transition toward making more autonomous decisions.

Another critical issue is designing more sophisticated trigger mechanisms to optimize memory access and retrieval. A typical scenario is patient education (Cai et al., 2023), where even if a doctor agent provides relevant information, a patient may fail to comprehend it if the readability level does not align with their health literacy. As a result, the memory module must incorporate more fine-grained access control mechanisms. For instance, if a patient agent exhibits comprehension difficulties (e.g., asking repeated questions or giving incoherent responses), the system should automatically adjust how information is stored and retrieved in the future, ensuring that when information is recalled, it is presented in a manner that better matches the patient's health literacy level. This mechanism can be further refined by using reading comprehension difficulty models to shape how patient agents interpret and respond to doctor queries, making their behavior more aligned with that of individuals with low health literacy.

Reasoning Mechanisms Most research is still limited to direct reasoning with a single path. However, this design struggles to generalize to the complex and dynamic real-world medical environment. Therefore, establishing a more adaptive reasoning framework that enables AI agents to make more reasonable decisions in uncertain environments is a key direction for future research. Note that this does not mean that direct reasoning of a single path should be discarded; instead, it should be used only as part of the agent reasoning mechanism to handle appropriate scenarios. In recent years, significant progress has been made in clinical reasoning, particularly in some multi-hop reasoning medical QA benchmarks (Xu et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2025b; Faray de Paiva et al., 2025; Tran et al., 2024; Hu et al., 2024a). These methods exhibit stronger adaptability in simulating clinical reasoning, allowing LLMs to handle complex medical reasoning tasks more effectively. However, these methods usually require a lot of computation during training or testing and have not been proven to be more efficient and flexible for agents in dynamic environments. The future challenge is further integrating these reasoning capabilities into AI hospital agents.

A core issue is that medical AI agents must be able to handle uncertainty and base their actions on

reasoning (Balogh et al., 2015; Alli et al., 2024). For example, in an AI hospital system, a patient agent may change its mind during a conversation, while a doctor agent may lack complete information about the patient's health status. In such cases, AI must understand and infer "Why did the patient agent change their mind?" to adjust its decision-making process accordingly. This involves not only general knowledge reasoning but also uncertainty modeling to improve AI agents' judgment and reduce hallucinations. For example, to better model uncertainty in AI hospital systems, Bayesian Inference and Markov Decision Processes (MDP) offer promising approaches (Bennett and Hauser, 2013; Polotskaya et al., 2024). Bayesian Networks enable AI to probabilistically reason over patient symptoms, history, and socioeconomic status, dynamically adjusting decisions via Bayesian updates. MDPs further support decision-making in dynamic interactions, optimizing actions based on state transitions and rewards. Given the inherent uncertainty in medical reasoning, Partially Observable MDPs (POMDPs) may provide a more realistic framework, allowing AI to infer missing patient information and adopt strategies like information gathering or abstaining from uncertain decisions.

Simulating Specific Scenario & Solving Complex Tasks One of the primary challenges in AI Hospital applications lies in achieving more precise and comprehensive medical simulations, particularly in integrating time-sensitive and event-driven information. Currently, most simulations are confined to patient visits, with limited consideration of pre-visit preparations, and even fewer studies focusing on after-visit follow-ups or daily patient care. However, in real-world healthcare settings, many critical factors occur beyond the visit itself, such as chronic disease management, post-surgical recovery, and long-term health interventions. Additionally, public health events like COVID-19 impact hospital operations and patient behaviors, necessitating adaptive multi-agent AI systems². However, current systems lack flexibility to model such disruptions, limiting realism (Gürçan, 2024). For example, social cognitive theory may offer a framework in such context for simulating patient decision-making, as individuals often rely on social dynamics over medical advice (Yang et al., 2024b; Al Owayyed et al., 2024). Integrating

²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impact_of_the_COVID-19_pandemic_on_hospitals

observational learning and social adaptation into AI agents can enhance patient behavior modeling, improving simulation fidelity and AI-driven health solutions.

Moreover, the robustness and reliability of AI Hospital remain major concerns. While multi-agent architectures showcase promising potential, they also introduce inherent challenges (Bertl et al., 2023), such as LLMs hallucination generation (Huang et al., 2025a; Zuo and Jiang, 2024; Li et al., 2023c), alignment issues, and limitations in long-text processing, which hinder their effectiveness in complex medical tasks. These problems are further exacerbated by the high frequency of interactions between agents, leading to computational bottlenecks and error accumulation, degrading the entire system's performance. For example, patient agents may incorrectly attribute their symptoms to severe illnesses (such as cancer) based on incomplete or incorrect information, while doctor agents may develop biases influenced by recent diagnostic cases (Quinn et al., 2021). If left unchecked, these biases can not only reduce the reliability of individual agents but also propagate errors throughout the system, amplifying their negative impact.

Finally, risk management in the AI Hospital is crucial (Balogh et al., 2015). Risks like the cumulative effect of error and the inability to handle long-tail cases or rare scenarios all underscore the importance of implementing safeguard mechanisms. For instance, in long-tail medical cases, the system may struggle to adapt effectively, leading to false positives or negatives, compromising diagnostic accuracy and wasting healthcare resources. To mitigate these risks, future work should integrate uncertainty quantification, allowing agents to trigger safety protocols when encountering ambiguous cases. Additionally, extreme scenario simulations should be employed to strengthen testing environments, ensuring system reliability under complex conditions. Designing error isolation mechanisms can prevent a single agent's mistake from cascading through the entire system. Finally, human expert intervention remains a critical safeguard, ensuring that AI-generated decisions align with ethical and medical standards through expert oversight and real-time monitoring.

Evaluating Agents Compared to general-domain evaluation methods, the unique characteristics of the medical setting—such as the roles of doctors and patients and the complexity of tasks—make human evaluation particularly challenging (Tam et al.,

2024). As a result, most existing approaches still focus on task accuracy, traditional generation metrics, or naive LLM-as-Judge evaluation methods, with limited consideration of efficiency and cost factors. Future research should explore more effective evaluation methods that align more closely with real-world medical practice. For instance, in actual healthcare environments, doctors are typically assessed through patient feedback, peer reviews, and survey-based evaluations (Baines et al., 2018). These social evaluation mechanisms have not yet been fully integrated into AI hospital system assessments (Moy et al., 2024). Additionally, drawing inspiration from the Turing test (Nov et al., 2023), researchers could investigate systematic methods to measure the "intelligence" and "usability" of AI agents during medical interactions.

Another overlooked aspect is cost and efficiency. In the general NLP domain, Scaling Test Time Compute (TTC) has become a crucial factor in assessing system performance improvements (Snell et al., 2024). However, in AI hospital research, little attention has been given to how computational resource consumption impacts the practical value of a system (Fan et al., 2024; Smit et al., 2023). Many AI hospital designs (e.g., Iterative Problem Optimization or Multi-Round Interactive Debate) achieve superior performance partially due to increased inference computational power rather than genuine intelligent collaboration. Therefore, future evaluation frameworks should consider how to standardize the cost of AI agents and establish reasonable value metrics. For example, an agent's computational resource demands, inference time, and performance gains could be factored into a weighted cost model to analyze the trade-offs between efficiency, cost, and performance across different strategies. Furthermore, in medical tasks, how different agents (e.g., expert-level AI vs. smaller-scale medical AI) collaborate to minimize costs—such as reducing reliance on high-cost models—remains an open question. One potential direction of exploration may be to simulate expert-medical student task delegation and collaboration. Here, experts are often more expensive in real-world tasks (such as medical annotation and evaluation), so strong LLMs that require more computational cost can be used, while corresponding medical students can use LLMs with weaker capabilities but more cost-effective. It is an interesting topic to study how to maintain high-quality results in tasks such as medical annotation and evaluation while reducing

the reliance on strong LLMs (i.e., reducing the computational cost of the entire system).

Additionally, most AI hospital research predominantly relies on general-purpose LLMs such as GPT-4 (Achiam et al., 2023) and LLaMA (Dubey et al., 2024), with limited exploration of medical-specific LLMs like DoctorGLM (Xiong et al., 2023), HuatuoGPT (Chen et al., 2023a), BianQue (Chen et al., 2023c), BioLLaMA (Tran et al., 2023), BioMistral (Labrak et al., 2024), and Baichuan-M1 (Wang et al., 2025). Some studies, such as MedQA-CS (Yao et al., 2024b), have noted that while medical LLMs achieve higher exam scores, they often lose emergent abilities—which are crucial for agentic behavior in AI hospital settings. As a result, many approaches merely use these medical models as "tools" (Frisoni et al., 2024) rather than active agents. Future work should focus on preserving these agentic capabilities in medical LLMs, given their clear advantage in medical knowledge. Moreover, this challenge aligns with the previously mentioned evaluation metric deficiencies—new benchmarks beyond medical exams must be developed to assess these models comprehensively. Without such advancements, it will be difficult to ensure simultaneous progress in both medical knowledge and real-world medical problem-solving capabilities.

Synthesizing Data for Training Efficiently synthesizing high-quality data for training in AI hospital systems remains a core challenge. Although existing studies, such as DeepSeek-r1 (DeepSeek-AI et al., 2025), have demonstrated that models can continuously improve through reinforcement learning (RL) (Jayaraman et al., 2024) in specific environments without supervised data, AI hospitals, as complex medical environments, have not yet been fully utilized as RL environments to support the training of medical LLMs and intelligent agents while providing high-quality synthetic data. In traditional RL frameworks, agents optimize their policies by interacting with the environment and receiving reward signals. However, in medical scenarios, the scarcity of real-world data and ethical constraints pose challenges in designing appropriate environments and reward mechanisms. AI hospitals offer a controlled simulation environment that can construct different types of feedback signals based on patient simulations, physician decision-making processes, and the success rate of medical tasks (Li et al., 2024b; Ouyang et al., 2022;

Rafailov et al., 2023; Yao et al., 2023; Mishra et al., 2024). For example, the AI hospital can simulate different patient recovery processes in training a postoperative care assistant. The agent's decisions—such as adjusting care plans, recommending follow-ups, or modifying medication regimens—can receive rewards based on changes in the patient's virtual health status. If the agent's decision accelerates patient recovery (e.g., an improvement in the virtual patient's health score), it receives a positive reward; if it leads to adverse events (e.g., a decline in the health score or the occurrence of complications), it receives a negative reward. This interactive feedback mechanism not only reduces reliance on manually labeled datasets but also enables agents to learn optimal medical decision-making strategies through trial and error.

However, ensuring that AI hospitals generate sufficiently diverse and fair data remains a critical challenge. Current synthetic data mechanisms primarily rely on manually designed rules, making it difficult to accurately reflect the complexity of real-world medical scenarios (Giuffr  and Shung, 2023). For instance, existing datasets often lack simulations of postoperative care and other longitudinal medical tasks, as well as sufficiently rich medical annotations, limiting the adaptability and generalization capabilities of intelligent agents. Additionally, with the introduction of self-training techniques, if agents are continuously trained on self-generated data, the homogenization of data distribution could lead to mode collapse or extreme biases, ultimately degrading model performance in real-world applications (Arora et al., 2023). Therefore, future research should focus on developing more dynamic data synthesis mechanisms, leveraging multi-agent collaboration to generate data that better reflects real-world medical scenarios. Additionally, integrating multimodal information—such as text, images, and speech—can enhance the expressiveness of these datasets (Acosta et al., 2022). Simultaneously, robust data evaluation and bias detection mechanisms must be established to ensure that synthetic data not only improves agent capabilities but also avoids reinforcing existing errors, safeguarding fairness and reliability (Ueda et al., 2023; Schmidgall et al., 2024a).