Opening and guest introduction

All right. Hey, guys, it's guys or guy. It's guy today. Yeah, I was gonna say it. Time for another kill, but something's missing here or someone, huh?

Yes, our friend Emerson was traveling today and not able to make today's recording. But you know what? We'll get through it. And I don't know that our questions will be quite as thought provoking as he's normally able do with our guests.

We will do the best we can and try to do this episode work out. I will say you do a pretty good job, Robert, of thought-provoking questions. With that being said, what's going on today?

All right, Jerry, today we've got an exciting episode with Morgan Munkata. He is the CEO and co-founder of Nehru Health, a pioneering digital health platform that's leveraging AI and data science to revolutionize sleep care.

With a mission to scale personalized sleep interventions and medical device solutions, Nehu empowers employees to boost workforce productivity and cut billions in healthcare costs by addressing sleep-related challenges head on.

fellow. Morgan brings over a decade of expertise in life sciences, leading product development, and he is a biotech innovator. So we have an extreme underachiever on the episode.

I was going to say, we keep having these under achievers join the show. Oh, OK. Harvard MBA, biotech, and life sciences. This is absolutely amazing. To boot.

Man, this is amazing, but I will say, I think you and I have met Morgan a couple of times, right, in the past. We have, yeah. So this is exciting. We had another AI episode just a couple of weeks ago, right?

And so I think we're going to see more and more AI coming and creeping in in the future. It's just the natural evolution of things. Absolutely. No, we, I think we certainly will.

And, uh, but what's interesting on today's episode, you're going to get to see a demo of the AI. So stay tuned for the rest of episode. It's going be a, it's gonna be fun to watch.

I'm looking forward to it. Um, shall we just go ahead straight to the show? Let's jump in. All right. Sleep Tech Talk is brought to you by Fisher and Paykel.

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These advancements continue to further enhance patient experience and outcomes. Now a word from our sponsor, MedBridge Healthcare. Medbridge Healthcare is a leading provider of sleep lab management services and home sleep apnea testing.

Morgan's background and Nehru Health team

MedBridge partners with hospitals, healthcare systems, and medical academic institutions to offer comprehensive, fully integrated services for sleep disorders.

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Our thoughtfully selected array of PEP interfaces and accessories complement our LUNA PAPP device-line while accommodating diverse patient requirements.

Robert, lights out. Welcome everyone once again to another episode of sleep tech talk of the sleep podcast with your host and friends, Anderson Kerr Robert Miller and me Dr.

Gerald George money code. Folks, we have an amazing amazing show. This time for you. And those of you who listen on the podcast platforms, I will ask you to just jump onto YouTube just this one time.

Well, probably in the future as well. But this is one I'm asking you, to jump on to the YouTube platform to see some of the demonstrations that are going to be taking place today.

Before we get started, just want to give a huge shout out to all our sponsors. We thank them so much, without which we can't continue to do this. Thank you all so much, folks.

Be sure to check out our sponsors who make this possible. And a huge shout out to each and every one of you for tuning in. We thank you so for that. You know we started this for you and we do this you.

Man, last several episodes have gone, have crossed the 300,000 views mark. Thank you once again. Please continue to like, subscribe, but most importantly, please continue share the show to anyone who's curious or wondering about sleep.

And of course, all you industry professionals, you always know you hear it here first. With that being said, Robert, what is going on today? Hey, Jerry, I just want to start with the fact that we are missing one of the three-headed monsters today.

So Emerson couldn't join us for the podcast today, he's going to regret that he missed this one because we're going have a little demo of some AI. This is my area of passion and not expertise, but passion, and something that I pay a lot of attention to in the world of sleep medicine.

And so it's AI, AI AI today And we have with us today, we Morgan Moncada, who's with this. He's the CEO and co-founder of Nehru Health. They're a pioneering digital health platform, leveraging AI and data science to revolutionize sleep care.

Morgan, welcome to the show. And, uh, w we're so excited to have you today and to talk, um, and discuss the, the this area of AI. Tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got into the world of sleep medicine.

Thanks so much Rob and Jerry for having me on the podcast. And I think I came at the right time regarding your rise in fame. So what helped get me started?

It's honestly being a sleep patient myself. I have struggled with my sleep ever since I can remember. and I got diagnosed with sleep apnea after undergrad.

almost failed out in my freshman year because I slept through a midterm for organic chemistry and had to retake it and didn't think that I could potentially have a sleep disorder until I went into a Sleep Clinic, had wait months to get an appointment, which is probably a common challenge today for a lot of patients still looking for those in lab PSG tests.

And then when I got diagnosed, I was honestly in denial of my diagnoses. And I mean, like I'm on the lower end of severity for sleep apnea, but because I didn't treat it and also I did know what the options were and wasn't followed through care, ended up developing insomnia as a result.

AI platform overview and patient support model

So it's been kind of a personal mission for me to resolve this area of life. And that kind of brings me to what we're

doing with Nehru. And throughout this, I've been building a career in the life sciences, mainly in therapeutics and synthetic biology and commercializations of those types of technologies to help patients.

So kind coming full circle, but from a digital health angle this time for sleep patients Hey, I will have to say, Morgan, you have become probably one of the most well-connected people in the world of sleep medicine over the last year.

It's interesting because anytime that I talk to other folks who are in industry, and I'll say have you heard of Nehru Health? And the answer is always yes.

And then I say do you know Morgan? The answer's always, yes! So you've done a great job of connecting with the industry through different conferences and that sort of thing.

But I know that at least one of the first times that we met, you have a small team there at NARU, but my goodness, there are a bunch of underachievers.

Can you tell us about the team? Yeah, so I'm joined by a really cool all-star team. I'll begin with my co-founder Maria. She's a patient herself of a different area, and it's an area that we're excited about expanding into.

And she's also a data scientist and an expert in AI. So she When people think of AI, they think conversational AI and chat GPT, but really classical artificial intelligence also includes machine learning.

And how do we use data from diagnostics devices, from biomarkers, and also continuous therapeutic devices like a CPAP machine to help a care navigation journey or therapy support program.

And so she brings that brilliance to the table and is from the Technical University of Munich, one of Europe's finest technology and entrepreneurship institutions.

diverse team of clinicians, respiratory therapists, we have sleep physician advisors who run sleep clinics and DMEs. We have Sleep Techs who've built their own insomnia apps.

we Have a resupply business development expert who actually worked in urology. So he's bringing that lens to res supply. And so, I think this diversity of experience, in addition to an awesome engineering team with backgrounds in voice AI technology, studying at top universities across Europe, and also working at Google level organizations, all that coming together with the clinical side has really been a pleasure to work with.

Morgan, can you tell us a little bit about the overall platform and what type of customers do you typically partner with to be able to bring the AI technology platform to their particular service?

Before you get into that, if you could just take a step back and talk a bit more about AI, why we should not be afraid of it. Yeah, no, I think that's a great question, especially when you think about layoffs happening in the tech industry, undergrads from top universities struggling to find jobs, everyone's both excited about what AI can do to transform their own life, but also fearful about it can affect their job.

And so we've been very careful about threading the needle so that our AI platform, which I'll describe, really empowers the clinical teams and scales the critical teams for a really underserved sleep medicine market.

And so as you know, there's like one sleep doctor, I think, for like 43,000 patients. So the top of the funnel is not growing as fast as the need for, and 80% of patients are undiagnosed.

So our goal is, and I firmly believe this in healthcare, is never to replace the human element, but only supercharge the sleep physician, the respiratory therapist, so that they're able to perform at the top of their license.

And our AI system is really just absorbing the level one and level two troubleshooting requests that every patient has, while the complex patient care is reserved for the human to human connection, as well as that therapeutic

alliance when a patient's first getting started with therapy.

Fisherman Peckel Solo is the world's first auto-fit CPAP mask. It simplifies setup with its revolutionary auto lock technology. Simply stretch to fit, touch to adjust.

Go to fphcare.com forward slash solo.

Nora voice demo and PAP troubleshooting

I love how you said that, and if Emerson was here, he would say this. I'll just echo what he normally says is, humans take care of humans, or people take of people.

But yeah, if you could go back to what Robert was asking you about the platform. Yeah, yeah, the platform and who do we help? So our platform is, we consider it kind of the next generation of patient care.

And what we are building is and have deployed is a unified patient engagement platform that supports patients through every step of their sleep medicine journey, as well as some other therapy areas that we're expanding into and the durable medical equipment space.

So we serve two different types of customers, the sleep clinics, especially virtual sleep, clinics and there's many more emerging obviously to meet the demand of the large amount of sleep apnea patients that remain undiagnosed.

And then this really cool intersection with durable medical equipment companies, which is this incredibly important, but. relatively unsexy slice of healthcare that involves everything from CPAP machines for sleep apnea, continuous glucose monitors for diabetes patients, to ventilators for COPD patients catheters for urology.

What we're seeing is a common problem across the entire industry is that patients fall through the cracks, whether they're patients like me just trying to get in for an appointment to getting diagnosed, to setting up with their device and getting support for their therapy, which benefits the patients when they succeed through this journey, but also ultimately the providers as well in terms of the economics that they benefit from.

And where we come in is that we are developing a unified patient support and management platform to automate operations at each of these different steps for a patient.

And they can interact with it through different ways. They can with through a phone number, like in a customer service phone tree. and they also interact through an AI patient companion experience that guides them every step through the journey.

So Morgan, does it sound like a robot when you're on the other end of the line, or is it a fairly natural experience for a patient? So I will say that it did sound a like robot last year when we first started building the voice capabilities, but the technology is advancing so much that is sounds quite lifelike.

So if you'd like, I'd be happy to call Nora and maybe chat with her a bit. That would be fantastic. And by the way, where did you come up with the name Nora?

Is there a reason that you picked that name specifically? we chose the name actually, it's because our customer, one of our first customers wanted to name it Nora.

And then we're like, well, that's very fitting considering our company's name is Nehru. We weren't sure if they were kind of also thinking along those lines.

and we just stuck with Nora, but what's cool is that, so Nora is just kind the embodiment of this agentic AI experience, But Nora can be renamed, white labeled, You can change the gender.

You could break Nora up into Nora and Norman, where Nora is doing the troubleshooting and Norma is handling the resupply. And part of these AI agents are interacting with the patient.

That's kind of the sexy part. the ocean iceberg that you see, but beneath are all these AI agents that are operating and doing tasks in the EMR to actually help with the workflow for the teams.

Hey, by the way, I was hoping for a heartwarming story about your grandmother named Nora who cared for you in summertime while your parents were at work.

I mean, you know, one of those kind of things. You know helped listening me a lullaby. I'm sure you could get Nora to do that now, so. Yeah, Nora can do a lot of those, those cool things.

So yeah, maybe I should, should call. Please. Okay. Right in. please let me know. Make sure that you can hear it well. Are you a sleep tech looking for new opportunities?

Well, MedBridge Healthcare is one of the largest employers of sleep technologists and they are growing. If you are a sleep technologist interested in a new position, potential paid relocation, or looking for a career advancement, consider a Career with MidBridge Healthcare.

Now back to the show. Hi, I'm Nora, your PAP Support Assistant with Nehru Health. I am here to help make your therapy as comfortable as possible. How can I help you today?

Nora, I am at the end of my rope. I have been struggling with this damn machine for weeks, and I had to use it to keep my job because I'm a truck driver.

Work 14 hour days in my cab driving across the country and every night I wake up and this mask is off my face blowing air everywhere and my mouth is as dry as a desert.

I don't know what to do. I want to give this up completely. Mike, I hear how overwhelming this has been for you and I truly admire your dedication to both your health and your job.

Let's take this one step at a time to make things easier for. You. It sounds like you're dealing with your mask coming off during sleep and waking up with a very dry mouth.

So let's start with the mask issue. Does that sound okay? Sure. Thank you, Mike. Since your mask is coming off during sleep, let's first check the fit.

Your mask, the AirFit F30, is a full-face mask. Can you try loosening the strap slightly so it's snug but not too tight? Let me know when you've adjusted it and we'll move to the next step.

How do I know what's the proper tightness? Great question, mike. The mask should feel secure but Try that and let me know how it feels. Okay, I tried it.

It feels better. But honestly, this mask gives me claustrophobia. And it's just, hey, i feel like Darth Vader with this on. I completely understand Mike.

Feeling clauster phobic with a full face mask is common and it is important to feel comfortable. Since the AirFit F30 is a Full Face Mask, would you be open to trying a nasal or nasal pillow mask?

are smaller, lighter, and less intrusive, which might help with that Darth Vader feeling. What are the differences between those two types of masks? A nasal mask covers just your nose and provides a secure seal, while a nasal pillow mask rests at the base of your nostrils.

Nasal pillows are the lightest and least obtrusive option, which might be ideal for reducing that claustrophobic feeling. Would you like to try one of these?

Yeah, sure. One of my friends, he has this Rio 2 nasal pillow mask. Is that something I could get? Yes, Mike, the Rio 2 nasal pillows mask is a great option.

It's lightweight, minimal, and designed for comfort, which could really help with your claustrophobia. Let me confirm your address for shipping. 127 Western Avenue, Austin, M. A.

2155. Actually, no. I moved. My new address is 5202 Alsace, A-L-S-A-C-E Avenue, San Diego, California 92105. Thank you for updating me, Mike. Let me confirm your new Perfect, Mike.

I'll send the request for the Rio 2 Nasal Pillows mask to our clinical team. If there are no issues, it will be shipped to your new address within five business days.

You're doing great. This change should make a big difference. Is there anything else I can help you with? Yeah, while I'm waiting, could you help me with this dry mouth that I am experiencing?

Of course, mike. Dry mouth can happen to explain how that works. No. Is there anything else I can do to maybe improve the dryness? Absolutely, Mike.

AI adoption, longitudinal care, and closing remarks

Increasing the humidity on your machine can help with dry. Would you like me to guide you on adjusting the Humidity settings? Yes, please. I had no idea there were even humidity settings with this device.

The problem, know once you've adjusted it. OK. I'll take care of that. While I'm waiting for my new mask, could you also help me reduce the pressure with my device?

For your safety, Mike, I can't guide you on adjusting the Pressure Settings directly. However, i'll send you a link to schedule an appointment with a NARU Health representative who can assist you with this.

They'll ensure everything is set up correctly for you. Is that OK? Yeah. Thank you, Nora. You're very welcome, Mike. I'll send you the link shortly so you can get the help you need.

You are doing an amazing job sticking with this and I'm here anytime you needed support. Dave travels and take care. Bye. Wow, that's that was absolutely amazing, Morgan.

I've got to tell you, so I used to do some other things in another lifetime. And just to hear, you know, it's about communication skills and to here the the intonations, for example, when she was confirming your address.

the upward inflection of the voice at the end to make sure that it was correct, one. The other is the other inflections and intonations of different sounds throughout.

It also shows some kind of emotion as well. So it's phenomenal to hear this. And watch your face also interact with Nora, it is so cool. I know, I'm sitting over there going, you know hashtag Nora cares.

Like. Yeah, yeah, and we were collecting. I mean, geez, we've grown to went from like zero patients at the beginning of this year to now more than 10,000 patients that are interacting with Nora somehow, like through the phone tree or through AI patient companion experience.

And it's just so gratifying to have 70 year old, 80 year-old patients troubleshooting their issues with Nora and they'll say thank you at the end. I mean, some of them, a lot of, them actually will remark on how advanced the technology has got.

And some, of then will play with Norah, you know, for the first couple of minutes. They'll still say some like outrageous things. Then a couple minutes in, they will suspend their disbelief and engage fully and actually get their problems resolved, which is really great.

You ever get those, hey, Nora, it's Friday night and I got no one else to talk to? So we have both, so Nora's omnichannel. So you can interact with her through text, through voice, or email.

There's other products that are coming out too. And so most of our patients on the AI patient companion experience, they're the ones that interact the most frequently, prefer text message.

And they do treat Nora like a confidant. And a lot of them will talk about, you know, what's going on in their life, other comorbidities, insomnia comes up a lots.

Did they like this mask that they just got? Is it leaving lines on their face? So there's a lotta really cool insights that we can get to create a richer experience for the patients.

Hey Morgan, have you considered, you know, with the release of Plato recently, we actually had Dr. Doug Kirsch on the show to talk about Plato. Have you thought about integrating those types of clinical assessments as part of, as Nora's completing a call, maybe she could ask a few questions that would fill in that clinical assessment.

And then maybe spit that out to the providers afterwards. Yeah, so that's an area that I'm really excited about actually. And we started adapting for one of our customers, their standard clinical questionnaire to profile.

It's almost like a stop bang, but it's a little bit more custom for them. So she can do different types of custom questionnaires and make it a lot more conversational.

whether that's Plato or the ISI for insomnia. So we're really excited or customer satisfaction even for a DME. There's a lot of different things that we can do to continue to profile and personalize that care for the patient.

So Morgan, I guess the question is, you did say there are a lot of products in the pipeline, but where can we go with this? I mean, my guess is we're just scratching the surface here when it comes to AI and being able to interact with patients and help us with that patient journey.

I think so. I thing we are at the beginning of a revolution in the next generation of patient care that is, it's like this phenomenon called Centaur Chess, which in their early days of like computer programming and AI, was this idea that if you combine a human with a digital or artificial intelligence system, both together are better than the human alone or the AI system alone.

And we are actually seeing that with our work with customers and their patients is that when we marry our AI system with a human clinician in the loop at various points in that patient care.

It almost becomes like a unique recipe for each patient. Like how much human care do they need versus AI care? And I think the The roadmap is endless with how can you really redefine how a clinician works with their patient by having an artificial intelligence system support their workflows and make it so that the patient feels continuously supported throughout.

And if they're a complex high needs patient, maybe they need more human touch points and the AI system is weaving back in. It's like a tapestry and each patient is their own thread on that tapistry of the patients care.

and they may need more human touch points. Fantastic. Well, I know that we're getting to the end of our time before Jerry cuts us off. Morgan, any sort of last comments for the show today?

And then, you know, make sure that our guests understand and know how to get how, to find Nehru Health or find you and make contact. Yeah, so please any guests, whether you're a patient or a provider at a sleep clinic, virtual sleep, clinic or durable medical equipment company would love to connect with you.

You can find me on LinkedIn. Feel free to contact and message me or go to naruhealth.com and go our website. And you can also book a demo to see this and how this could help your patients.

One thing I'd like to leave you with is that I think reiterating that patient-centered care is really at the heart of what we do. And it's around finding what's the right way to engage a patient continuously.

Really what were building is a platform that I could redefine a lot of chronic care. We began in sleep, but we're expanding to other therapy areas. I really think where healthcare needs to go, especially with the looming growing aging population is continuous care at scale across multiple chronic diseases.

So we're really excited to expand beyond sleep while also deepening how far can we go into sleep. And one area I'm particularly excited about is insomnia because there's so much comorbidity with sleep apnea patients and insomniac patients.

It's an indication that's close to my heart. Morgan, before we go, I know we're running out of time, but I do have to ask this, you know, the clinician in me is making me want to asked this.

One of the big issues with patients on PAP therapy is that the drop-off rate. So you have the patients that are staying on for three months and then 50% of those patients drop off and they stay on a year or two years and another 50 percent drops off.

And I think one of big challenges that we have are having the ability or the availability of clinicians to reach out to those patients on a regular basis to ensure that they stay on therapy and continue on that journey.

Do you see this as filling that gap between the patient and getting that intervention from a clinician? Yeah, I'm really glad you asked that because that's The core to our mission is providing longitudinal care access.

So it's not just supporting the patient through that 90 days increasingly our customers and partners are asking us to expand to 180 days and then they're like, well, can you support the And I think that healthcare is evolving more towards these longitudinal care models, where really the only way that a doctor or a respiratory therapist would be able to manage that entire patient population, because you constantly get new ones in the door.

You want to help those because they're the most severe needs immediately. But you don't want forget about Mrs. Jones that was struggling six months ago.

And she seems like she's doing well, but she is on vacation. She didn't bring her CPAP, and she also has two weeks of the flu. So it's like, how do you get her back on the therapy?

So I think that's really where a technology like this can look out for patients up forever as they continue their care journey. Well, thank you so much, Morgan.

We are out of time. Robert, did you want to say anything before we close? No, I just appreciate Morgan's perspective and you can tell how passionate you are.

We appreciate you being on the show today, Morgan. Great stuff. And we look forward to even bigger and better things in the future. Yeah, it's always a pleasure, Jerry and Rob.

Thank you so much for having me. Oh, pleasure is ours. Before we go, is there anything that you want to touch upon that we haven't talked about before we close?

No, I think we covered everything. Yeah, maybe just one more thing is that we've been actually pretty surprised at the adoption of AI just broadly in health care and how ready people are, even older patients.

And I thinks it's because of chat GPT. Chat GP and generative AI have actually inversed how technology is adopted and that unlike computers and electric vehicles, it went mass consumer.

day one. And so I think that has really made the market warm. So I only think we're only going to see increasing adoption. But it has to be good. It has be high quality.

it hasn't not spammed the patient. Has to abide by TCPA regulations. Have proper clinical safety guardrails. Not perfect, but it is evolving and it's getting better and better every day.

Excellent. Morgan, thank you so much for joining us. And we sincerely appreciate you being here. It's exciting to see what AI can do and what you've brought to the landscape.

We can see the applications being, like you said, beyond what we're doing right now and to other disease states as well. And folks out there, thank you so much for joining us.

I hope you enjoyed this very special episode. And we ask you once again to be sure to check out Morgan. We're going to have information in the show notes of Morgan and Nehru Health.

as we're doing right now. And thank you all so much for all your support, all the likes, the subscriptions, and especially the shares. Please continue to share this with everyone out there.

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Our thoughtfully selected array of PEP interfaces and accessories complement our LUNA PAPP device-line while accommodating diverse patient requirements.

All right, man. That was a show. The demo, that really, really was amazing. I know, well you know that Emerson usually says people take care of people, but I think AI takes care people too sometimes.

That may be a little sacrilege, and I would have to also agree that sometimes, yeah, you could see there where the intervention definitely could help.

I was just thinking all the different possibilities. A patient could call in at two o'clock in the morning and you don't have staff at that time. What do you do, right?

And AI can help you there. Right? Aunt Nora. Exactly. Aunt Norah. That's the thing. I thought the name was cool as well. Forgot to ask about the origins of the names and such, but still it was pretty cool to hear Nora speak and watching his interaction.

But watching Well, not to mention that he was sort of giving her a hard time. Exactly. Him telling this long, drawn out story about how much he hated his CPAP machine.

In a fairly empathetic way, the technology was sensitive to that and tried to bring up solutions and problem solve. Nora sounded very patient. Wouldn't you agree?

Well, I definitely think she's a good listener because his initial rant about his CPAP was fairly substantial. Right. I'm trying to figure out how Nora takes down those notes to address each and every one of the pain points that the patient brought up.

Yes, unbelievable, really. What great technology. Good for Morgan and that group. He's just a great guy, great person. Anytime I've had interaction with him, he's this humble leader.

And I know that he is excited about his technology and his platform. There is a definite sincerity in his purpose for what the company's mission is. I definitely agree, but this actually begs the question from me to you, Robert.

You know, we on the show and off the shows, and in fact, when we were at Smokey Mountains at the conference a few weeks ago, We talk about where the direction of the industry is going.

Where do you see, you personally, I mean, Morgan talked a little bit about it, where do see AI taking us? I think he sort of headed in the right direction when he talked about the fact that for me, all I really wanted to do is to

supercharge the capabilities of the people who are involved in practice of identifying patients who might have a sleep issue, getting them quickly through a diagnostic process and then into the form of therapy that's going to be best for that patient.

So that how I hope all of this technology and change is going be beneficial to the field of sleep medicine. And ultimately, I think that because to me, it's gonna take those types of resources to really move the needle in gaining access to all these people that we talk about all the time who are still undiagnosed and untreated.

That's well said. I agree with you there. It's an augmentation that will help us get to the next level in patient care. Great word for it. Yeah. Well, I get great words once in a rare while, so thank you for acknowledging that.

Yes. With that, it's a good time to stop where I'm leaving at a high point. That is right. A great episode today, great new stuff, and great technology.

What a great conversation. Agreed. And folks out there, thank you all so much once again. Until next time. Cheers. Be sure to check out our clinical sponsor, Sleep Review Magazine.

More details in show notes.