2:15pm
aligns business with data
and predictive analytics

6:00pm
aligns outer strength
with inner peace

Saving lives and finding peace of mind

With the right predictive analytics solution, one hospital CIO reduces fatal infections — and gets more time for her family and her yoga practice.

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At 9 p.m. on a Tuesday, Joanne Hardy arrived home from work. She leaned on the balcony railing in her high-rise condo and scanned the horizon, looking for the hospital where she worked as the CIO. It was easy to find — almost as easy as it was to let her work at the hospital consume her. She paused briefly and tried to remember the breathing and relaxation techniques she had been learning in her yoga classes.

Unfortunately, she hadn't unrolled her yoga mat in weeks, even though she knew how much it would help her unwind. *What a day*, she thought, stretching her neck to each side. Then —

Three months, three deaths.

The dreadful numbers came back to her. It had become difficult for her lately to think about anything except the three people who had died in the last 90 days from infections acquired at her hospital. Even though statistics were her life, those three people and their families were much more than statistics. She felt awful about those numbers and the suffering they represented.

Joanne had built a successful career by empowering analytics teams to predict and prevent negative healthcare outcomes. She had always believed in the numbers and in the constant rules behind them. But now, the numbers weren't adding up.

Joanne's back was stiff and her nerves felt raw. *I really need to do some yoga*, she thought. She went inside, sat down on the floor, stretched her legs in front of her and reached for her toes. She exhaled and felt her back relax a little, but she couldn't stop thinking about those three families. *What more can I do to stop these bad outcomes?*

Looking for a distraction, Joanne grabbed her phone and scanned her newsfeed on Facebook: funny cat videos, her college roommate's vacation, and then a picture that her daughter Aly posted of Joanne's adorable, four-year-old granddaughter, Mandy. She hadn't seen either one of them in almost a month because of events at the hospital, missing an outing with Aly and Mandy the previous week and dinner at their house the previous night.

Suddenly Aly popped up in chat: "Wanna come for lunch tomorrow? We missed you last night."

Joanne sighed. *Man, would I love to take a real lunch tomorrow*. She replied, "Love to come, need to wrap up a few things first. Call you in the a.m."

Wake-up call

The next morning, the buzz of Joanne's phone on her nightstand jolted her awake. She picked it up and saw her boss's name — hospital CEO Paul Rider — and the time — 6:35 a.m.

"Good morning, Paul," she said, stifling a yawn.

"Hello, Joanne," Paul said. "Sorry to call so early, but I wanted to let you know that we had another death from a hospital-acquired infection this morning. We'll be on the news again."

Joanne's neck tightened as Paul asked how her team could help them get out in front of the problem. "Frankly, the software we use to spot trends in the data and anticipate the incidence of infection is inadequate," explained Joanne. "We've been making do because of budget cuts, but now I think we can't afford **not** to find a better solution."

"I agree," responded Paul. "Post-surgical site infections are at an all-time high. Tell you what. I'll go to the board and get the funds you need for better software. That Wall Street Journal article I sent you makes it very clear that deaths like the ones we're experiencing are predictable and preventable."

"Absolutely, Paul -- and thanks," Joanne said.

Paul hung up. Joanne felt a headache coming on as she pondered Paul's news, but felt a glimmer of hope about the software.

Skipping her morning yoga routine (again), she showered, grabbed a granola bar and dashed to work. On the drive into the office, she called Aly to let her know she might have to skip their lunch date.

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Time for a change

At her desk, Joanne searched her email for a message she had flagged from Dell Software. It mentioned a case study about analyzing historical patient data against real-time patient data acquired during surgery, and it described how one hospital had used predictive analytics software called Statistica to reduce infection rates greatly. She scanned the message, clicked through to a trial of Statistica, then forwarded the message to her team.

After a short meeting with Paul, Joanne headed back to her office. Standing tall and stretching her arms overhead, she swooped down into a graceful forward bend, letting her neck and back relax. *Ahhh, I've missed this.*

She straightened up, realized it was already past noon, glanced at her laptop and saw a queue of email awaiting her attention. She paused, then grabbed her coat and headed for the elevator, texting Aly that she was on her way. In the car, she began to feel relief at the progress she was making. *At least it's a start to helping the hospital use all of its data for better outcomes, she thought. And now look at me — heading out for a real lunch hour!*

Data scientist in a box

The next day, Joanne called a team meeting and asked the analysts what they thought of Statistica.

"You can store the analytic model in a server, and then share it with different people in your research group and with other departments as a best practice for predicting infection," said Melinda, the youngest and most eager data analyst of the team. "You're not bound to a specific PC or server, so you can run the analytical models using a mobile application or a web browser and access the results."

Jason, a senior analyst, also chimed in: "I'm really impressed by the precision this tool allows. You can easily blend historical and real-time data to quickly calculate risks. I think it could actually save lives, not just reduce costs. This is what we've needed for a long time. We have to get this."

"Okay," said Joanne. "Jason, I'm making you the owner here. Let's try to get a quote today. Did you guys check out any other tools?"

"Yeah," Melinda said. "We tried a few others. They're fine, but Statistica has this built-in data scientist expertise. It was easier to use than the others, and it actually guides me through my work. I think it's a no-brainer."

"Great. Looking forward to seeing how much it will cost us," replied Joanne.

Knowing that her team was moving things forward, Joanne left work right at 5 to get to a yoga class in her neighborhood. She rolled out her sticky mat, laid on it for a moment and began to feel her stress melt away.

Two and a half months later ...

Joanne stood in Paul's office and gazed over his shoulder at the clear blue sky and greening trees.

"Great numbers, Joanne," said Paul. "Zero hospital-acquired infections in the past two months. Your team is really adding a lot of value. It's incredible how the right predictive analytics software can actually save lives. For a relatively small investment in software, the bottom-line impact has been huge."

Joanne nodded. Her team was not only contributing more to the business but also saving patients' lives. She was taking better care of herself and spending more time with her family. In two months she had not missed her Tuesday evening class, and she had also joined a family yoga class with Aly and Mandy on Saturday mornings to spend quality time with her two favorite girls.

Her life was finally back in balance.

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