To much fanfare, IBM's Watson system vanquished the two best human Jeopardy! players on the planet. After this victory, in a much-reported follow-up, IBM began to target the medical realm for deployment of Watson+ and parts thereof. (I write 'Watson+' because the strategy is to augment and enhance Watson in certain ways.) The brute fact is that we have now moved that much closer to a longstanding dream of many in AI: the automation of medicine. But can physicians eventually be replaced by computing machines, whether in the form of intelligent software for diagnosis and ongoing treatment, or robots for surgery? On the assumption that Watson+ points the way toward how the future machines that replace physicians would work, the answer, as I explain, is a resounding "No!" One fatal flaw in Watson+ that implies this negative answer is that it simply doesn't understand in the least how things work. For example: One suspects that it comes in rather handy in cardiology to know that the heart is a pump; yet Watson+ only knows such things as that the string 'pump' turns up in various documents near the string 'heart' (and near the string 'well'). I end by considering whether the fatal flaws in Watson+ can be surmounted by engineering that exceeds both what IBM carried out and what it currently envisions. It turns out that I'm pursuing some of this very engineering with collaborators—but our group's aim is to use this more powerful engineering to help physicians, not supplant them.

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There will be plenty of time for questions and answers. Everyone in the AMC and Capital District community is welcome to attend.