

## Annual report 2021

### EUPHA Digital Health section (EUPHA-DH)



#### Overview and goals

As digitalization is permeating all aspects of society, questions arise as to how it can be fruitfully employed to sustain the public health goals of quality, accessibility, efficiency and equity in healthcare and prevention. The EUPHA Digital Health Section was approved by the EUPHA Governing board in November 2019, in the context of the 12th European Public Health Conference in Marseille, France. Acknowledging the importance of the current and future role of digitalization in public health and building on the enriching discussion stimulated by past EPH scientific sessions, the establishment of a EUPHA thematic Section on Digital Health was proposed with the aim of bringing together researchers, policymakers and practitioners across Europe working on digital public health for knowledge sharing and capacity building. The Section aims to work across competences, disciplines and settings to apply EUPHA's strategic objectives to the field of digital health. The Section aims at building advocacy, and at gathering, producing and disseminating evidence on the need for and on the impact of digital solutions for public health. It brings together a core group of experts in selected digital health aspects, facilitate the exchange of national-level best practices and stimulate the Europe-level debate to place digital public health high in the EU policy, research and education agenda.

## **The Steering Committee of the Digital Health Section**

This last year has been central for the development of the section. In 2021 we called for motivated colleagues, interested in the many aspects of digital public health to join our Section steering committee. A large number of brilliant professionals applied to be member and after a rigorous and thoughtful selection process our group was formed. The team is composed by a group of diverse and ambitious professionals sharing a common goal: the progress of Digital Public Health. This new core group has brought new energy and new expertise, setting the tone for an exciting future for the Digital Health Section. A strong steering committee is helping to deliver the agenda and the priorities that the section has set for the years to come. Our Steering committee reflects the section membership in terms of geography and multi-disciplinary expertise within the field of digital health. The Digital Health Section Steering Committee Such a group support different section actions including: research monitoring, communication, events and advocacy, reactive to policy needs at the European level, and ensuring that the voice of EUPHA is heard.

### **Steering Committee Members:**

**Monica Georgiana Brînzac**, Research Assistant Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Romania

**Prof Luis Lapao**, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal

**Dr Marie-Annick Le Pogam**, University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland

**Brian Li Han Wong**, Youth Officer, The Lancet & Financial Times Commission on "Governing Health Futures 2030: Growing up in a digital world", London, UK

**Laura Maass**, PhD University of Bremen, Bremen, Germany

**Dr Robin Ohannessian**, Co-founder and Director at Telemonica and Télémédecine 360, France

**Dr Juan José Rachadell**, PH Resident, Lisbon, Portugal

**Dr Sebastiano Sorbello**, MPH Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston, US

**Prof Anthony Staines**, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland

**Dr Duarte José Vital de Brito**, PH Resident, Central Lisbon PH Unit, Portugal

**Dr Alice Vodden**, MPH Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK

**Prof Hajo Zeeb**, University of Bremen, Bremen, Germany

## Activities at the EPH conference (14th EPH Conference 2021)

At the 14th EPH Conference we encouraged the largest possible DH section members participation and we are actively worked to propose a rich set of Digital Health-related activities. We pre-reviewed several abstracts relevant to digital public health and supported ideas for digital health-related pre-conferences, round tables or workshops, we grouped proposals, facilitated connections and coordinated several proposals' submissions.

### ▪ Plenary Session:

PL4 - Capturing the breadth and depth of the digital health era – beyond the COVID-19 pandemic

Joint Plenary with WHO/Europe

### ▪ Workshops:

2G. - The European Health Data Space (EHDS): future opportunities and current challenges Joint workshop with EUPHA-PHMR

3.E. - The Role of Digital Public Health in the European Climate Pact and Green deal

Joint workshop with EUPHA-ENV, WHO/ Europe, Climate Reality Leaders

29.C. - Workshop: Assessment, regulation and use of apps for health management: where we are and where we are going? Joint workshop with EUPHA-HTA

### ▪ Round tables:

3.G.- How to prepare the public health workforce for a digital health future?

8.A. - Governing digital transformations in health: Shaping the digital future of Europe Joint Round table with Governing Health Futures 2030

9.C. - Digital innovation to fight the pandemic, what is here to stay?

### ▪ Skills Building Seminar:

8.G. - AI for public health dummies – overview and a benchmark algorithm: Random Forests

Joint seminar with Unisanté (Switzerland)

## eHealth Stakeholder Group

The European Public Health Association Section on Digital Health has continued its prolific activity as member of the European eHealth Stakeholder Group. The eHealth Stakeholder Group provides advice and expertise to the Commission, particularly on topics set out in the Communication on enabling the digital transformation of health and care in the Digital Single Market, that was adopted in April 2018. In particular in relation to the following areas: i) Health Data, including taking forward the Commission Recommendation on a European Electronic Health record exchange format and the further elaboration



of the baseline set of technical specifications and better interoperability, ii) Digital health services, iii) Health data protection and privacy issues, iv) Cybersecurity for health and care data, v) Digital tools for citizen empowerment and person centred care, v) Artificial intelligence and health, as well as other cross cutting aspects linked to the digital transformation of health and care, such as financing and investment proposals and enabling technologies.

## Digital & Innovation Skills Helix in Health (DISH)

In the context of the DISH (Digital & Innovation Skills Helix in Health) project , the European Public Health Association Section on Digital Health gave valuable feedback and expert opinion on pilots projects that are currently being conducted in six countries. The DISH project aims at bridging the “missing link” between the progressive digitalisation of the healthcare sector and the lack of eHealth and innovation skills among health and social care professionals to fully benefit from the use of innovative eHealth products and solutions. The DISH project will equip the health and social care



workforce with relevant knowledge and competencies as well as enabling them to use and implement eHealth solutions supported by national digitalization strategies.

## International Digital Health Cooperation for Preventive, Integrated, Independent and Inclusive Living (IDIH)

EUPHA is part of the IDIH Users Consultation Group. The International Digital Health Cooperation for Preventive, Integrated, Independent and Inclusive Living (IDIH) is a project funded under the European Union Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, bringing together prominent organisations from EU and five Strategic Partner Countries, i.e. Canada, China, Japan, South Korea and the USA with the aim to promote and increase international collaboration to advance digital health to support active and healthy ageing through innovation.



## ECDC consultation digital technologies for public health key functions

EUPHA DH section, together with the IDC section took part in the ECDC consultation digital technologies for public health key functions. The consultation took the form of a series of virtual workshops scheduled between May and June 2021. The scope of the consultation was digital technologies and innovations, such as AI, blockchain, data science, including big data analytics and analysis, automation, robotics, wearables, nanotechnologies, point-of-care etc and their possible impact on and use for key public health functions. The objectives of the consultation meetings are to evaluate and discuss the results of a scoping review and other related work on digital technologies for key public health functions; to exchange ideas and information; to look at practical examples and lessons learned; to discuss opportunities and challenges, and to look ahead at the next 7-10 years.

## Relevant publications on behalf of the Section



**EUPHA @EUPHActs · 3 Feb**

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A great piece by our [@euphadh](#) section on the implications of digital public health for public health policy and practice in Europe. Congratulations to all of the authors.

## The dawn of digital public health in Europe: Implications for public health policy and practice

Brian Li Han Wong,<sup>a,b,c,d</sup> Laura Maaß,<sup>c,e,f,\*</sup> Alice Vodden,<sup>c,g,h</sup> Robin van Kessel,<sup>i,j</sup> Sebastiano Sorbello,<sup>c,k,l</sup> Stefan Buttigieg,<sup>c,m</sup> and Anna Odone,<sup>c,k,l</sup> on behalf of the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) Digital Health Section

<sup>a</sup>Secretariat, The Lancet and Financial Times Commission on Governing Health Futures 2030: Growing up in a digital world, Global Health Centre, The Graduate Institute, Geneva, Switzerland

<sup>b</sup>Medical Research Council Unit for Lifelong Health and Ageing at UCL, Department of Population Science and Experimental Medicine, UCL Institute of Cardiovascular Science, University College London, London, UK

<sup>c</sup>Digital Health Section, European Public Health Association (EUPHA), Utrecht, The Netherlands

<sup>d</sup>Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER), Brussels, Belgium

<sup>e</sup>Leibniz Science Campus Digital Public Health Bremen (LSC), Bremen, Germany

<sup>f</sup>Research Center on Inequality and Social Policy (socium), Bremen, Germany

<sup>g</sup>East London NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK

<sup>h</sup>Department of Public Health and Primary Care, Institute of Public Health, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

<sup>i</sup>Department of International Health, Care and Public Health Research Institute (CAPHRI), Maastricht University, Maastricht, Netherlands

<sup>j</sup>Studio Europa, Maastricht University, Maastricht, Netherlands

<sup>k</sup>Department of Public Health, Experimental and Forensic Medicine, University of Pavia, Pavia, Italy

<sup>l</sup>School of Medicine, Vita-Salute San Raffaele University, Milan, Italy

<sup>m</sup>Ministry for Health, Malta

- Li Han Wong B, Maaß L, Vodden A, Van Kessel R, Sorbello S, Buttigieg S, Odone A, European Public Health Association (EUPHA) Digital Health Section. The dawn of digital public health in Europe: Implications for public health policy and practice. The Lancet Regional Health – Europe, Volume 14, March 2022, 100316
- Odone A, Gianfredi V, Sorbello S, Capraro M, Frascella B, Vigezzi G, Signorelli C. The Use of Digital Technologies to Support Vaccination Programmes in Europe: State of the Art and Best Practices from Experts' Interviews. Vaccines 2021, 9(10), 1126.
- Pegollo L, Maggioni E, Gaeta M, Odone A. Characteristics and determinants of population acceptance of COVID-19 digital contact tracing: a systematic review. Acta Bio-medica: Atenei Parmensis, 10 Dec 2021, 92(S6):e2021444
- Mazza C, Girardi D, Gentile L, Gaeta M, Signorelli C, Odone A. Public health effectiveness of digital contact tracing in the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review of available data. Acta Bio-medica : Atenei Parmensis, 10 Dec 2021, 92(S6):e2021439

### General communications with section members

- **Newsletter & section webpage:** we communicate with members through newsletters, email and updating the section [webpage](#).
- **Social media:** we are active on Twitter through the [Section official Twitter account](#)