



Annual report 2023

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.



Activities at the EPH conference (16th EPH Conference 2023)

The Dublin EPH Conference, chaired by Digital Health Section Steering Committee member Anthony Staines, was an important opportunity for the Section to propose a rich set of Digital Health-related activities. The Conference, in line with the overall theme “Our Food, Our Health, Our Earth: A Sustainable Future for Humanity”, will include digitalization and “the use of digital tools” as one of the key themes. 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.

The DH section was also among the panelist of a plenary session:

■ Plenary:

- [On the path to an equitable and sustainable digital future for European health systems](#)
Organized by WHO Regional Office for Europe

The DH section organized one pre-conference session and three workshops, detailed above:

■ Pre-conference:

- [Better public health: a data centred approach to interoperability, with international information standards](#)
Joint Pre-conference with GGD-GHOR (Netherlands), EUPHA Public health monitoring and reporting section, Leibniz ScienceCampus Digital Public Health Bremen (Germany), Sciensano (Belgium), Population Health Information Research Infrastructure, DCU CEIC (Ireland)

■ Workshops:

- [2.F. Workshop: Innovations for chronic diseases management: complementing usual care with digital therapeutics](#)
Joint workshop with EUPHA-CHR
- [6.F. - Workshop: Digital public health in Europe - What is the new normal?](#)
- [8.E. - Workshop: Digital Public Health and Climate change: The European Framework made easy](#)
Joint workshop with EUPHA-ENV

The EPH “Expanding Horizons: Digital Innovations, Monitoring, Foresight” track included seven workshops, two sessions of oral presentations, and two session of pitch presentations.

eHealth Stakeholder Group



The EUPHA Digital health section is part of the European Commission's eHealth Stakeholder Group. In March 2023, the EUPHA's membership was renewed for the 2023-2026 mandate. In 2023 the section continued its prolific activity, providing continuous commitment and support in

particular for Digital Health interoperability in Europe promotion.

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, vi) cross cutting aspects linked to the digital transformation of health and care, such as financing and investment proposals and enabling technologies.

WHO/Europe briefing on the regional roadmap for antimicrobial resistance



The Digital Health Section participated on behalf of EUPHA in a virtual briefing organised by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, providing input and feedback to the regional roadmap on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) under development (March 2023).

International participation in events on behalf of EUPHA

- May 2023. Tilburg Law School Panel at 16th international Computers, Privacy, and Data Protection (CPDP) conference. How should the existing digital divide be addressed to achieve equal and inclusive healthcare in Europe through digital transformation?
- May 2023. European Public Health Week - The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. Universal access to care: how can we overcome barriers in the patient's journey? Spotlight on geographical barriers

Relevant publications on behalf of the Section

- Gentile L, Bertuccio P, Ancona A, Cucchi A, Dallagiocoma G, Godoy MA, Signorelli C, Odone A. Can youtube be trusted as a source of quality and reliable information on COVID-19 vaccination in Italy? *Acta Biomed.* 2023 Aug 30;94(S3):e2023163. doi: 10.23750/abm.v94iS3.14558. PMID: 37695176.
- Dallagiocoma G, Alberti F, Odone A. The efficacy of digital media tools to promote a healthy diet in children: A systematic review of intervention studies. *Acta Biomed.* 2023 Aug 30;94(S3):e2023157. doi: 10.23750/abm.v94iS3.14293. PMID: 37695189.

- Nguyen TPT, Do AL, Do HN, Vu TMT, van Kessel R, Wong BLH, Boyer L, Fond G, Auquier P, Nguyen TT, Latkin CA, Ho CSH and Ho RCM. Evidence of internal structure of the transactional eHealth literacy among Vietnamese youth: An instrument validation study. *Front. Public Health* 2023 11:1036877. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2023.1036877
- Holly L, Wong B L H, van Kessel R, Awah I, Agrawal A, Ndili N et al. Optimising adolescent wellbeing in a digital age. *BMJ* 2023; 380 :e068279 doi:10.1136/bmj-2021-068279
- Van Kessel R, Kyriopoulos I, Wong BLH, Mossialos E. The Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Digital Health–Seeking Behavior: Big Data Interrupted Time-Series Analysis of Google Trends *J Med Internet Res* 2023;25:e42401 doi: 10.2196/42401
- Maaß L, Holl F, Hrynyschyn R. How to evaluate health and medical apps in public health - what are alternatives to randomized controlled trials?. *Population Medicine*. 2023;5(Supplement):A644. doi:10.18332/popmed/165233.
- Forberger S, Freye M, Buttigieg S, Maaß L. Digital Public Health Governance - navigating complex structures. *Population Medicine*. 2023;5(Supplement):A650. doi:10.18332/popmed/165392.
- Maaß L, Holl F, Buttigieg S, Iyamu I, Pan C. Learnings from digital public health interventions in practice: challenges we embraced. *Population Medicine*. 2023;5(Supplement):A645. doi:10.18332/popmed/165264.
- Maaß L, Freye M, Pedrós Barnils N, Pan C. How to achieve effective interdisciplinarity in digital public health practice. *Population Medicine*. 2023;5(Supplement):A646. doi:10.18332/popmed/165268.
- Maaß L. How to measure digital public health system maturity on a national level: an international interdisciplinary Delphi study. *Population Medicine*. 2023;5(Supplement):A569. doi:10.18332/popmed/165196.
- Maass. An International and Interdisciplinary Delphi Study to Measure Digital Public Health System Maturity. *The European journal of public health*. 33, no. Supplement_2 2023

Other activities - Research project DHEAL-COM

EUPHA's Digital Health Section contributed to the Digital Health Solutions in Community Medicine (DHEAL-COM) project, which started in 2023 and will involve the Section for the next three years. The overall objective of the DHEAL-COM project is to establish a Life Science Hub as a reference model for the development and improvement of digital technologies for community medicine, supporting the development and promotion of research and innovation activities for information technologies and new personalised technologies, according to the needs of primary users (e.g. target populations), secondary users (e.g. carers), tertiary users (e.g. professionals, policy makers, industry) and territories, with the involvement of sector companies. The research activities in which the Section is involved are aimed at identifying and updating evolving health needs and standardising an innovative approach to eHealth for the target populations, as well as carrying out pilot projects to assess the impact of this training on improving citizens' digital literacy.

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](#)