

Leading the Future of Global Health with Responsible Artificial Intelligence



World Health Organization

Introduction

For over two decades, WHO has pioneered the evaluation and adoption of digital health technologies, which includes benchmarking Artificial Intelligence (AI) for health during the last decade. Today, we stand at the forefront of integrating AI to advance global health goals. The rapid evolution of AI offers unprecedented opportunities to enhance health outcomes, optimize health services, and promote health equity.

“ *Transforming Health Systems with Responsible Artificial Intelligence.*”

Opportunity

For over 2 decades the World Health Organization (WHO) has been supporting countries evaluate and adopt digital and information technologies to accelerate progress towards global health goals. Since 2018, WHO has been helping countries assess, curate and adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI) based technologies to improve health for all.

AI offers immense opportunities to improve health outcomes (via early disease detection, prediction, etc.), as well as enhance health services (via optimized

resource allocation, behaviour change interventions, etc.), in pursuit of global health equity. Moreover, AI can augment and complement the capacities of health workers as well as empower individuals and communities to take charge of their own health.

In essence, strong evidence and WHO guidance already exists on how AI can assist in diagnosing and treating diseases, personalizing and optimizing therapies, and improving the quality and safety of patient care.

Challenges

If poorly governed or implemented, AI-based systems have also shown potential to introduce serious risks and bottlenecks to appropriate care and to exacerbate inequity. These include ethical issues, such as ensuring respect for human dignity, autonomy, and justice, as well as safeguarding data privacy and security. They also include technical issues, such as preventing and correcting algorithmic bias and

discrimination, as well as ensuring the validity, reliability, and transparency of AI systems. Many countries are working to address priority AI regulatory and governance issues, including establishing clear roles and responsibilities for oversight, accountability and liability mechanisms, and standards and guidelines for the development, deployment, and evaluation of AI in health.

Priority Areas of Work



Strategic Priorities

- **Expert Guidance and Governance:** Providing comprehensive guidance on ethics, regulatory considerations, and governance models to ensure responsible AI integration.
- **Benchmarking, Testing, and Standards:** Establishing benchmarks and testing protocols to ensure safe and effective AI use in health settings.
- **Knowledge Sharing and Workforce Development:** Investing in training programs to cultivate an AI-ready healthcare workforce.
- **Applications and Evidence-Based Research:** Driving research to assess AI's effectiveness and feasibility in healthcare.
- **Localization and Customization:** Tailoring AI models to local contexts and healthcare settings.
- **Community Engagement and Collaboration:** Hosting platforms for collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders.

Our Vision

At WHO, our vision for AI in health is in line with WHO's mandate "health for all, all for health," supporting responsible, ethical, and equitable AI for all. WHO recognizes that **AI in health is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve its strategic priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals**. We envision a future where evidence-based, robustly governed, responsible AI is seamlessly integrated into

health systems. A future wherein AI technologies revolutionize healthcare delivery, allowing us to address longstanding health disparities and create a healthier, more resilient world for generations to come. Through collaborative efforts and unwavering dedication, we can realize the full potential of AI to transform global health and create a brighter, more equitable future for all.

Commitment

As we embark together on a transformative journey, WHO reaffirms its commitment, as the lead United Nations specialized agency responsible for international public health, to stewarding the responsible use of AI to improve global health outcomes. We are committed to uphold the highest standards of ethics, inclusivity,

and transparency in the development and deployment of AI ecosystems. By working with governments, international partners, academia, and other stakeholders, we can unlock the full potential of AI in advancing Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A Path Forward

It is imperative to have robust and comprehensive guidance and frameworks to ensure that AI in health is used in a responsible, ethical, and equitable manner, ensuring safety and humanity, with the ultimate goal of improving health and well-being for all. Such guidance and frameworks should be based on sound evidence, best practices, and multi-stakeholder consultation, and should be aligned with the core values and principles of the

World Health Organization (WHO), such as universal health coverage, health equity, and health security. Moreover, these technologies are not static, rather the rapid pace of innovation necessitates agile and responsive efforts to ensure that guidance is produced in a relevant and timely manner. WHO's flagship initiative on AI has helped support agile coordination of AI governance & policy recommendations.

Key Asks

To Member States

- Establish ethical and equitable governance with regulatory frameworks to implement AI in health
- Strengthen evidence-based AI
- Invest in knowledge sharing and exchange
- Foster international collaboration
- Join and support the Global Initiative on AI for health

As we embark on this transformative journey, WHO reaffirms its commitment to stewarding the use of responsible AI to improve global health outcomes. By working with governments, international partners, academia, and other stakeholders, we can unlock AI's full potential to advance Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To Other Stakeholders

- Adopt responsible AI practices
- Develop robust evaluation and benchmarking
- Contribute to knowledge-sharing and exchange
- Collaborate across sectors
- Engage in building capacity to localize AI models



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