



# Growing up **2030** in a digital world

**GOVERNING HEALTH FUTURES**  
THE LANCET & FINANCIAL TIMES COMMISSION

**The world is experiencing a very rapid and cumulative rate of change. Digital and data tools and technologies are fundamentally changing approaches to health and design of health systems - but governance models have not yet followed the pace of innovation.**

**A Lancet & Financial Times Commission (Governing health futures 2030)** has been established to run from October 2019 - December 2021 to explore the convergence of digital health, artificial intelligence (AI) and other frontier technologies with universal health coverage (UHC), with a special focus on improving the health of children and young people. This Commission will:

- Explore how to ensure that digital development helps improve the health and wellbeing of all at all ages especially children and young people,
- Focus on examining integrative policies for digital health, AI and UHC that are being developed around the world to identify which have the greatest potential to improve health and wellbeing and maximize health equity in resource poor settings, while ensuring human rights,
- Deliver a clear set of recommendations on the governance of digital health, AI and UHC, taking full account of geopolitical, economic and social factors.

## **Deliver on improving people's lives**

**It is of special importance to consider the implications of digitalization in countries with high youth populations.** Decades of neglect and underinvestment have had serious effects on the health and wellbeing of young people and adolescents aged 10 - 24 years throughout the world, according to a 2016 Lancet Commission. With over 200 million people aged between 15 and 24, Africa has the youngest population in the world. Most are growing up in countries where preventable and treatable health problems remain a daily threat to their health, wellbeing, and life chances. The way digitalization is governed and made accessible will either exacerbate these challenges or help resolve them. The present generation of young people may be the first to demand and to gain a clear set of rights

in relation to rapid technological development. These rights must allow them to „survive and thrive“ and significantly improve their health and wellbeing.

## **Leveraging digital and mobile technologies for health**

**Governments, international organisations, development agencies and business are increasingly exploring how smart technology, AI and other digital health technologies can address inequities and help accelerate progress in health.** In some countries there have been unprecedented developments in information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and mobile phone penetration, today over 40% of young people in Africa are already connected and nearly 300 million new subscribers are expected to access the mobile internet in Africa in the next decade. There is high potential to improve health through digitally-enabled health systems and behavioural interventions, but there are also deep concerns about ownership, privacy, human rights and increasing commercialization.

## **Integrated systems for equity and inclusion**

**At present countries lack approaches that fully integrate digital health in all its forms with UHC and primary health care and ensure an equitable, appropriate, safe and affordable digital response to the challenge of children's and young people's health.** One potential lies in creating seamless child and youth healthcare by embracing digital platforms, but such approaches also need to take the impact of varied forms of datafication and dataveillance of children, from in utero through to the school years into account. The regulatory environment in many countries is often weak and children and young people remain particularly vulnerable to data exploitation and marketing. Specific instruments to safeguard children's rights in the digital age are needed as well as opportunities for them to participate in matters that affect their wellbeing and enable them to play an active part in society. Children and young people must benefit from, not be threatened by a digital world, they must be involved in developing approaches to their future.

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## Responsible governance in an age of algorithms

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**Digital health from mobile phones to AI and Blockchain are not just an add-on of new technologies but a force that will require the health sector to think far beyond its present paradigms.** Analysts agree that the healthcare sector will be revolutionized in the next 10 years – the question will be along which governance and business model this occurs. Deep learning for example with its power to recognize patterns, optimize for a specific outcome and make predictions, will not only impact public health, epidemiology and gold standards for evidence – but society overall. New ethical issues arise as digital opportunities will also provide the entry point to steer health behaviours in everyday life, generate new dependencies as well as creating a new relationship between personal data practices and big data politics.

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## The dynamics of the new digital health ecosystem

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**A new set of stakeholders from the digital and AI field – driven by different values, mindsets and governance models – have entered the health sector.** In some countries governments are heavily involved, in others digital health is left to the market, or – especially in resource-poor settings – to the whims of development agencies and philanthropic actors. Digital and AI solutions can be rules-based, open, commercialized or authoritarian; they can build on the involvement of citizens, communities and patients or can be focused on health professionals only. There is a need to understand how uneven distribution, uneven quality, different levels of acceptance in different cultures, and different governance models, impact on successful application. To achieve impact and ensure rights it is essential to think beyond the technology.

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## A call for international coordination and coherence

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**While technology races ahead, the response from international agencies and governments has been slow to address issues of governance and regulation, especially in relation to health, human rights and public goods.** The Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, which will report in mid-2019, will provide guidance on how to maximize the benefits of emerging digital technologies in various policy areas including health through better governance, with a view to also facilitate the participation of all stakeholder groups, including youth and women, in the digital sphere. Specialized UN agencies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) are also working on long-term digital strategies to inform their mission. Ensuring coherence will be critical as global actors move forward and different digital platforms and strategies emerge.

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## The Governing health futures 2030 Commission's approach

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In a world in which individual data is becoming one of the most valuable resources on the planet, the Commission will support the dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders on ethical guidelines, governance approaches, institutional responsibilities and standards that need to be put in place in relation to health.

### The Governing health futures 2030 Commission will:

- bring together **independent Commissioners** from a range of sectors and disciplines as well as being geographically diverse and gender balanced. They will meet as whole three times around the world to ensure a broad input of voices. Between meetings commissioners will divide into working groups and conduct dialogues throughout the world;
- have an **outreach strategy** in cooperation with the Financial Times and other partners including youth organisations to ensure the dialogue with developers, start-ups and industry;
- **Establish links** with other digital health and AI initiatives underway through its members and outreach and make full use of global, regional and national events to debate and present its work and its findings;
- **Build on the work of other Commissions**, High-Level panels and intergovernmental processes
- **Work with international agencies** – especially WHO, UNICEF and OECD – to ensure a productive interface.

The **Commission secretariat** is housed at the Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies in Geneva. It will coordinate the work of the Commission under the guidance of the Co-chairs.

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### Co-chairs

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- Professor **Ilona Kickbusch**, Chair, Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland.
- Dr. **Anurag Agrawal**, Director, Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, New Delhi, India.

