GOVERNING HEALTH FUTURES 2030:
GROWING UP IN A DIGITAL WORLD

YOUTH EDITION
These materials were produced by the Secretariat of the *Lancet* & Financial Times Commission on Governing health futures 2030: Growing up in a digital world (GHFutures2030). The original report was published in *The Lancet* on 24 October 2021 and is available online at https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/governing-health-futures-2030.

The work was supported by grants from CIFF, Fondation Botnar, SDC, UNICEF, and Wellcome Trust.

Thanks to Tina Larson Hill and Chris Larson from Prographics for designing the report.

If you would like to know more about our work we do please visit our Website. To find out more on how we engage with youth please visit GHFutures2030 Youth Network

# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The future is digital</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital transformations in health</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities and challenges for governing health futures</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main findings</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a difference: What you can do</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glossary</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Artificial intelligence</strong></td>
<td>Branch of computer science concerned with building smart machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence.</td>
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<td><strong>Children</strong></td>
<td>Young people who are below the legal age of majority. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is a person under the age of 18 years.</td>
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<td><strong>Commission</strong></td>
<td>A group of global experts who are asked to study a topic and come up with some ideas or recommendations to fix a problem.</td>
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<td><strong>Data</strong></td>
<td>Information, usually in the form of facts or statistics, that can be analysed and used in decision-making.</td>
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<td><strong>Data solidarity</strong></td>
<td>An approach to the collection, use and sharing of health data that protects individual human rights while simultaneously building a culture of data justice and equity, and ensuring that the value of data is harnessed for public good.</td>
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<td><strong>Determinants of health</strong></td>
<td>Social, ecological, political, commercial and cultural factors that influence health status and outcomes.</td>
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<td><strong>Digital health</strong></td>
<td>The field of knowledge and practice associated with the development and use of digital technologies to improve health.</td>
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<td><strong>Digital technologies</strong></td>
<td>Electronic tools, systems, devices and resources that generate, store or process data.</td>
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<td><strong>Digital transformations</strong></td>
<td>The integration of digital technology and data into all areas of everyday life, including health, and the resulting changes that they bring about.</td>
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<td><strong>Equity</strong></td>
<td>The absence of unfair and avoidable differences among population groups. An equity approach recognises that some people may require greater levels of support to reach an equal outcome because of their different circumstances.</td>
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<td><strong>Governance</strong></td>
<td>A political process to better direct or shape something.</td>
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<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>According to the World Health Organization, health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity; a fundamental human right.</td>
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<td><strong>Human rights</strong></td>
<td>Moral principles or norms for certain standards of human behaviour which are protected by international law.</td>
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<td><strong>Inclusion</strong></td>
<td>The act or practice of including and accommodating people who have historically been excluded (e.g. due to race, gender, sexuality, religion, or ability).</td>
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<td><strong>Public health</strong></td>
<td>Focuses on improving and protecting community health and well-being, with an emphasis on prevention among large groups of people.</td>
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<td><strong>Public value</strong></td>
<td>When something benefits, or contributes to the good of, society.</td>
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<td><strong>Solidarity</strong></td>
<td>A sense of unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially amongst individuals with shared interests, objectives, standards, and sympathies.</td>
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<td><strong>Universal Health Coverage</strong></td>
<td>Making quality health services available for all and ensuring that people are not pushed into poverty by the costs of health care. It includes the full spectrum of essential, quality health services, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care across the life course. (WHO, UHC2030)</td>
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<td><strong>Wellbeing</strong></td>
<td>Wellbeing can mean different things depending on where you live and the experiences you have. Generally, it is understood to be the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy; or judging life positively and feeling good.</td>
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<td><strong>Youth</strong></td>
<td>A period of transition from childhood dependence to the independence of adulthood (UNDESA, 2013). While typically defined as young people between the ages of 15 and 24, the Commission has considered ‘youth’ to be more fluid than other fixed age-groups.</td>
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Introduction

This document summarises the main messages from the report of the Lancet and Financial Times Commission on Governing health futures 2030: Growing up in a digital world which was published in October 2021. It explains why the Commission was created and what its key findings and recommendations are. This youth edition of the report is written especially for older children and youth who are interested in the ways that digital technologies are shaping our health and wellbeing. At the end of the document, there are some ideas for ways that young people can get involved in building better digital health futures.

The Commission’s report contains lots of technical terms which are highlighted throughout the document like this. All of these terms are defined in a glossary.

If you would like to read the full Commission report in The Lancet journal, it is available online at https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/governing-health-futures-2030.
The future is digital

Our world is undergoing big changes. Climate change, urbanisation, conflict, and the COVID-19 pandemic are among the major shifts that are transforming people’s lives, our planet, and our futures.

One of the most radical changes facing our world is the rapidly growing use of digital technologies and the data that these technologies produce.

Access to the digital world is increasingly important for our learning and development, accessing the things we need, staying in touch with friends and family, and for having fun.

The wide incorporation of the internet, digital technologies, and online platforms into different areas of our lives—including our health and wellbeing—are called digital transformations.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 90% of the world’s population has access to a mobile-broadband network.¹

In 2015, world leaders agreed on a set of global targets called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This included a target to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) by 2030. UHC means that all people can get the health care they need without being pushed into poverty.

Many countries are not on track to achieve UHC by 2030. The use of digital technologies and data could help us to make faster progress towards health for all.

DID YOU KNOW?

Globally, one in three children and young people have internet access at home. But there is a big gap between access in high-income countries (87%) and low-income countries (6%).

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Digital transformations in health

Technologies are changing how we learn about health issues, how we access our health care, public health systems, and even who and what we trust to help us make health-related decisions.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2019, 7.4 million children, adolescents, and youth died mostly of preventable or treatable causes.³

The United Nations estimates that 5 billion people will not be able to access essential health services in 2030.⁴

Here are just some of the ways that digital health tools can help us improve our health and wellbeing:

- Health workers can provide advice and diagnose many problems via a mobile phone or video call allowing people to deal with some health concerns without having to visit a hospital.

- Doctors and scientists use equipment powered by artificial intelligence to help them quickly and accurately detect, treat, and prevent diseases.

- Many websites and smartphone apps are available to help us stay healthy and learn about different health issues. Wearable devices such as smart watches can help us track our fitness and vital signs.

- Health records saved on computers, rather than on paper, makes it easier for different health workers to get accurate information about us and to provide better care.

- Digital data helps governments and other health-care providers learn about the health of a community or population and improve the services they provide for us.

As well as creating lots of opportunities to improve healthcare, the use of digital technologies could actually harm our health and wellbeing. For example:

- It can be hard to tell which digital health apps give good advice and whether health information on the internet is accurate or not.

- Digital health tools could be programmed in ways that unfairly discriminate against groups of people and create unequal health outcomes.

- When we are online we can be exposed to content that is harmful to our physical or mental health or that encourages unhealthy behaviours.

- When we use digital technologies, lots of data about our health and wellbeing is collected by companies. This data can potentially be used to get us to spend too much time online or to buy things that aren’t good for our health.

Researchers and scientists are learning a lot about how digital technologies can impact our health and wellbeing. But technologies and how they are used are changing all the time. There is still a lot we don’t know.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In our survey of more than 23,000 young people from around the world, **88% said they use some form of digital technology for health-related purposes.**

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Growing up in a digital world

To better understand how digital transformations in health can help or harm children and youth, it is important to consider what it means to grow up in a digital world.

Young people today experience digital transformations differently than older generations. Their lives are recorded digitally from—or even before—birth.

In general, young people use digital technologies more than older people. This means they have more opportunities to benefit from the digital world but also more chances to be exposed to risks that might damage health and wellbeing.

Even young people born in parts of the world that aren’t as well connected to the internet are affected by the ways that decision makers like governments and businesses use digital technologies and data.

Children and youth may require special support and protections because they have not yet developed the knowledge and skills needed to safely and effectively use digital technologies. In addition, they often have less freedom than adults to control their internet access, use of devices, or how their data is collected.

Young people’s experiences of growing up in a digital world aren’t all the same. Many young people remain totally disconnected and are missing out on opportunities to use technology to support their development, wellbeing, health, and citizenship.

Check out the Commission’s profiles of digital childhoods.
Opportunities and challenges for governing health futures

Figuring out how we maximise the benefits and reduce the risks of digital transformations to create better health futures is what the *Lancet* and Financial Times Commission on Governing health futures 2030: Growing up in a digital world (GHFutures2030) was created to explore.

The Commission specifically focused on the governance of digital health and studied the ways that different countries, businesses, and global organisations are using digital technologies and data to improve young people’s health and wellbeing. They also gathered information on what kinds of policies and plans countries already have on technology and health.

**READ MORE**
Visit the GHFutures2030 website to learn more about the Commission and how it worked.

**HOW THE COMMISSION WORKED**

The GHFutures2030 Commission spent almost two years doing research and talking to leading experts from around the world about the ways that digital technologies can contribute to UHC and support or harm the health and wellbeing of young people.

The Commission convened many meetings with experts from around the world and spoke to young people about their hopes and concerns around digital technologies, health, and the future.
Main findings

Viewing digital transformations of health through the lens of UHC, the Commission found that countries’ approaches to digital health governance are missing some important things:

1. A VALUE-BASED FRAMEWORK FOR GOVERNING HEALTH FUTURES

Most digital health strategies aren’t focused on maximising the public health value of digital health and data and digital technologies to tackle global health challenges and improve the health of as many people as possible.

Approaches to digital transformations in health and other areas are not sufficiently grounded in key principles—such as solidarity, human rights, equity, and inclusion—which could help to increase the public value of digital health and prevent technology and data being used in harmful ways.

Despite the global nature of the internet and digital transformations, governments are slow to cooperate with other countries in agreeing common global frameworks to govern digital health and health data.
2 ADDRESSING DIGITAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Whether a person is healthy is increasingly shaped by their access to affordable digital technologies. Therefore, digital connectivity should be considered as an important determinant of health.

Governments are not using their full powers to control the actions of technology companies so they promote health, wellbeing, and human rights—especially for young people.

This has led to an imbalance of power with some companies and countries extracting large amounts of data from people without creating public value.

3 PUTTING YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE

Overall, young people are excited and optimistic about the benefits of digital transformations for their health and wellbeing. But, they are:

- Concerned about the risks that they are exposed to online;
- Unsure about what health-related information available online they can trust;
- Uncertain about the privacy of their data and how it is being used.

Despite young people being uniquely equipped to shape positive health futures, their views are almost never prioritised in digital health strategies and youth are seldomly involved in policy development or technology development.
Digital transformations have the potential to improve everyone’s health and to allow young people to play a bigger role in making decisions about things that affect their lives.

But this will only be possible if collective action is taken to strengthen the governance of digital technologies and data.

To harness the power of digital technologies for better health, the Commission is calling on governments, technology companies, and other organisations to take action in four areas:

1. **Address the role of digital technologies as determinants of health**
   - **Decision makers need to invest** in health and education, preparing young people for work, climate action, and the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. Without these crucial investments we will not have better health futures (with or without digital technologies).
   - **Close digital and health divides** by connecting everyone to the internet as a critical way to expand access to health services for the most vulnerable people.
   - **Reduce the uneven power over digital technologies** currently held by tech giants and build the power and agency of young people and their communities to shape the future of digital health.
Develop stronger policies and laws to promote human rights—including children’s rights—in the digital environment including to protect individuals against online harms.

Improve the involvement of local communities and patients, particularly children and youth, in the design of digital health technologies and policies.

Increase people’s digital, health, and civic knowledge and skills so they can effectively use and understand digital health technologies.

Fight against health disinformation.

Build people’s trust in digital health

Govern health data to increase its public value

Take a data solidarity led approach to unlocking the shared public value of data whilst safeguarding individual human rights.

Agree on universal rules for sharing data to build trust between individuals, health providers, and governments.

Make global agreements to prevent harmful data collection and use.

Hold organisations responsible for the collection and use of people’s health data. Ensure remedies exist for people whose health data has been misused.

Invest in the enablers of digital transformations of health and UHC

Regularly check how prepared a country is to maximise the opportunities (and reduce the risks) of the digital transformations in health.

Identify and implement the digital health tools and approaches that will have the biggest benefits for people’s health.

Put in place permanent programmes to support ongoing training of the current and future health workforce to be well prepared for digital transformations of health and data-driven health systems.
MAKE A DIFFERENCE: WHAT YOU CAN DO?

EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN BUILDING BETTER HEALTH FUTURES.

Here are some ideas for how you can get involved. We’d love to hear your ideas too!

› Tell us what you think about the Commission’s findings and recommendations. **What did we miss?** How do you plan to take particular recommendations forward in your country?

› Talk to your family, friends and teachers about what you’ve learned. **Discuss what can be done in your community** to create better health futures for you and other young people.

› **Participate in the local decision-making** processes involving the future of health.

› **Join the GHFutures2030 Youth Network** and get involved in the next phase of the Commission’s work.

Still curious? Learn more about digital transformations in health. Visit the Commission’s website and follow us on social media to find more information.

Visit the Youth4HealthFutures section of the GHFutures2030 website: [https://www.governinghealthfutures2030.org/youth-page/](https://www.governinghealthfutures2030.org/youth-page/)

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