
Cover Memo: Volume 21, Issue 3, Special Issue on Youth-Centered Digital Health Policy

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On behalf of The *Lancet* and Financial Times Commission on Governing health futures 2030: Growing up in a digital world ([GHFutures2030](#)), the co-chairs are honored to announce the publication of the *Journal of Science Policy & Governance* ([JSPG](#)) Special Issue, Volume 21, Issue 3, focused on ***Strengthening Youth-Centered Policy and Governance of Digital Transformations in Health***.

In October 2021, the Governing Health Futures 2030 Commission published a timely and [ground-breaking report](#) which proposes a new vision for the governance of digital transformations and data: one that moves away from current models of commercialisation and data extraction, and towards public purpose, data solidarity and Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The report was developed through an inclusive and participatory process, with youth involved at every stage.

For young people's health and well-being to thrive in an age of digital transformations, and to accelerate public health and UHC, the Commission recommends that policymakers and other stakeholders take action in three areas:

1) Put young people at the center

Young people need to be enfranchised to co-design and critically engage with digital first health systems as part of efforts to increase public participation and digital health citizenship.

2) Enact value-based approaches to governing health futures

A mission-oriented, precautionary, and value-based approach to digital and data governance is needed to build public trust in digital health ecosystems, address the unequal distribution of power and resources within and between countries and close digital divides. Whilst governance frameworks across the world will continue to be shaped by diverse contexts, political systems and sociocultural norms, all approaches should be grounded in a common set of universal values. Specifically, any tension between health and digital transformations should be resolved in favor of the core values of 'Health for All' and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): democracy, equity, solidarity, inclusion and human rights.

3) Address the digital determinants of health

Policymakers and other actors must recognise the digital ecosystem as an increasingly important determinant of health, establish governance frameworks and regulatory responses in response to the direct and indirect Digital Determinants of Health (DDoH), and close critical evidence gaps on the effects of DDoH and well-being.

For children and young people to truly have agency with respect to digital technologies and approaches for which they are the intended end-users or beneficiaries, they need to be enfranchised and empowered to participate – beyond just being loosely engaged – in every step of the way from research to implementation.

Leading up to the submission deadline, *JSPG* and The Lancet and Financial Times Commission organized a series of training sessions to provide prospective authors with opportunities to practice policy writing, and to inspire and empower them with expert perspectives on digital health policies to inform their submissions to the Special Issue. We invited students, post-doctoral researchers, policy fellows, early career researchers and young professionals from around the world to submit policy briefs, policy analyses and position papers, technology assessments and other articles addressing bold and innovative policy ideas for governing health futures towards the SDGs and achieving health for all.

In April 2023, the Commission, in order to implement the recommendations of the Report, will transition to the DTH-Lab (Digital Transformation of Health Lab), establishing itself as an innovative thought leader and action-oriented platform. The DTH-Lab will work through a distributive governance model, initially led by four core partners: [Ashoka University](#) (India), [CIGI](#) (Canada), [GHFutures2030](#) (Geneva) and [PharmAccess Foundation](#) (Nigeria). The DTH-Lab will include young people within its governance structure and will practice inclusivity from conception as youth will be **equal partners** in decision making with other stakeholders and be consulted and meaningfully engaged in the execution of initiatives led by the DTH-Lab. In parallel, we will set up a Fellowship Programme whereby students and early career professionals, the majority coming from low and middle income countries (LMICs), will have opportunities to support a specific area of the DTH-Lab's research or analysis.

Action is required to translate the Commission's recommendations and conceptual ideas into implementable solutions. The **mission of the DTH-Lab** is therefore to make the Commission's recommendations tangible for decision-makers and to catalyze a whole-of-society effort towards their implementation, ensuring a key role for young people.

I would like to thank the authors, the reviewers for their feedback, the workshops participants and speakers - all those who contributed freely and enthusiastically to this process. Also a big thank you to the *JSPG* team for their dedication and professionalism.

This Special Edition on **Strengthening Youth-Centered Policy and Governance of Digital Transformations in Health** demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the relevant health impacts of the digital transformation and the analytical and critical thinking of young professionals to provide solutions. The published papers discuss a wide range of topics encompassing DNA sequencing, the digital divide, design of policy and regulation and promotion of equity, to name a few. The youth authors' passion to active contribution and the grasp of opportunities brought by the digital transformation strengthen the common values of 'Health for All' and the DTH-Lab's vision for 2030 - to enable digital first health systems to deliver equitable benefits for the health, well-being and safety of young people and their communities.

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Aferdita Bytyqi is a Senior Coordinator of the Secretariat of the *Lancet* and Financial Times Commission on Governing health futures 2030: Growing up in a digital world (GHFutures2030). Aferdita Bytyqi directs and coordinates the implementation of the Commission work plan, the report and its derivative technical materials, and all activities related to the Commission and Secretariat. Ms Bytyqi has over 20 years of progressive and relevant programme experience in implementing international research, development, and regeneration programmes on behalf of multilateral and bilateral agencies and private donors. Before joining the Commission, she was the Director of Finance and Operations at ICS Integreare and previously worked with MBM, FAO, WHO. She has worked in emergency, conflict and post-conflict environments, as well as with developed and developing countries. Selected publications include The State of the World's Midwifery 2014 (SOWMY 2014; SOWMY 2011) report as part of UNFPA's High Burden Countries Initiative, Analysis of the Midwifery Workforce in Selected Arab Countries (2015) and The Lancet Special Series on Midwifery (2014). Ms Bytyqi is an Architect and has a MSc. in Urban Development and Planning from UCL.

Ilona Kickbusch is a Chair of the International Advisory Board, Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Ilona Kickbusch is the Founder of the Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute in Geneva. Her areas of expertise include the political determinants of health, health in all policies and global health. She advises countries on their global health strategies, trains health specialists, and is involved in German G7 and G20 health activities. She publishes widely and serves on various commissions and boards. Ilona is a member of the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board and Co-Chair of UHC 2030, and the Lancet and Financial Times Commission on "Governing health futures 2030: growing up in a digital world". She has had a distinguished career with the WHO. She was a key instigator of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion and WHO's Healthy Cities Network and has remained a leader in this field, most recently advising on WHO's activities related to Health in the SDGs. She was the Director of the Global Health Division at Yale University School of Public Health and responsible for the first major Fulbright Programme on global health.

Anurag Agrawal is a Dean of BioSciences and Health Research at the Trivedi School of Biosciences within Ashoka University. Dr Anurag Agrawal is an Indian pulmonologist, medical researcher, and the former director of the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, a CSIR institution. Known for his studies on lung diseases, Dr Agrawal is a senior DBT-Wellcome Trust India Alliance fellow. He received the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize, the highest Indian science award, for his contributions to Medical Sciences in 2014, as well as the National Bioscience Award for Career Development in 2015. As the head of a national laboratory and as an elected fellow of both the major national science academies of India, Dr. Agrawal is deeply engaged with the science-society interface and biomedical policy development. His current focus areas include use of information technology and big data analytics for effective application of community health efforts and development of pattern-based diagnostics. His group has also developed integrated solutions for healthcare delivery and digital data collection in resource-limited settings, as well as computational tools for visualization and analysis of complex medical datasets.