ANNOTATIONS ON GLOBAL STRATEGY ON DIGITAL HEALTH
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wfuna
World Federation of United Nations Associations

WHO Headquarters
Avenue Appia 20
1211, Geneva, Switzerland

WFUNA
Email: wimun@wfuna.org
Phone: +41 (0) 22 917 32 74
Instagram: @wimunsecretariat

GLOBAL MODEL WHO 2025

ANNOTATIONS ON

DIGITAL HEALTH AND AI

The text referred to as "Anchor" above each annotation in this document can be found in the document titled, "Global strategy on digital health 2020-2025" that is uploaded as a separate document on your simulation webpage. The highlighted text in that document and the annotations are color-coded to assist you in linking each annotation with the appropriate text in the original document.

¶ 1 – Anchor: "Global strategy on digital health 2020–2025 was endorsed …"

Did You Know That…

WHO's Global Strategy on Digital Health, approved in 2020, helps countries use technology to improve health services. It encourages the safe use of digital tools such as telemedicine, health apps, and online patient records. This global plan treats technology as part of everyday health care, not a separate activity.

Things to Think About

How can digital tools make health care fairer for people in poor or rural areas? What risks might arise if some groups lack internet or smartphones?

Interesting Facts

More than 150 countries have now used parts of this plan to guide national digital-health programs.

Glossary

Global strategy on digital health – A plan that helps countries organize and use technology to support health services and decision-making.

¶ 3 – Anchor: "Objective 1: Promoting global collaboration and advancing the transfer of knowledge on digital health"

Did You Know That…

WHO trains government officials and health workers around the world to share what works in digital health. They exchange ideas about online patient records, remote care, and artificial intelligence (AI) tools. Sharing knowledge helps countries avoid repeating mistakes and makes it easier to use safe, proven methods.

Things to Think About

When countries share data or digital systems, how can they protect privacy and security? What happens if technology developed in a rich country does not fit the needs of a poorer one?

Interesting Facts

In 2024 alone, WHO ran workshops for over 1,600 officials from 100 countries on digital health and AI.

¶ 8–10 – Anchor: "National, scalable digital health programmes … AI training and ethics"

Did You Know That…

Countries like Estonia, India, and Saudi Arabia show how large-scale digital systems can work. Estonia created a secure electronic-health-record system; India built a national health ID network; Saudi Arabia opened virtual hospitals for remote care. AI is increasingly used in these systems to spot patterns in patient data and predict who may need extra care. But AI can sometimes amplify unfair patterns found in past data—for example, if a dataset contains more men than women, the AI might make less accurate decisions for women. WHO trains countries to look for these problems and fix them.

Things to Think About

How can countries use AI to support doctors without letting machines replace human judgment? What simple rules could protect privacy and fairness?

Interesting Facts

Since 2020, the number of countries with a national digital-health strategy has risen from 85 to 129.

Glossary

AI bias – When computer programs make unfair decisions because the data they were trained on do not represent everyone equally.

¶ 13 – Anchor: "Training and capacity-building on digital health"

Did You Know That…

WHO runs training programs that teach doctors, nurses, and health planners how to use digital tools and understand AI. This includes learning how to read data, notice errors, and use information to make better decisions. AI can help predict which patients may need care soon, but people must still check and confirm the results. These skills make sure humans stay in control of technology.

Things to Think About

How can countries make sure health workers in rural areas get the same digital training as those in big cities? Why is it important for people—not machines—to make the final health decisions?

Interesting Facts

Since 2022, more than 10,000 health workers have joined WHO's online courses on digital health and AI ethics.

Glossary

Capacity-building – Helping people and institutions gain the knowledge and tools they need to do their jobs better.

AI literacy – The ability to understand what AI can and cannot do, and how to use it safely.

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Objective 2 – Anchor: "Advancing the implementation of digital health strategies"

Did You Know That…

Many countries now have digital health strategies that aim to connect hospitals, clinics, and health apps through one system. This helps doctors and patients share information safely and quickly. When AI tools are added later, these systems can learn from health data (see definition below) to spot trends, like early signs of disease outbreaks or medicine shortages.

Things to Think About

Why is it important for governments to plan early for how digital tools and AI will fit together? What could happen if countries rush to use AI before they have safe systems for storing and sharing data?

Interesting Facts

Countries that built strong national plans before introducing AI report fewer technical problems and more public trust in digital health programs.

Glossary

Digital health strategy – A national plan that helps health systems use technology safely and effectively.

Objective 3 – Anchor: "Strengthening governance for digital health"

Did You Know That…

WHO is helping countries create simple rules for how to use digital health and AI tools responsibly. These include protecting privacy, keeping data secure, and ensuring technology benefits everyone, not just those who can afford it. Ethical guidance means that governments must check whether digital tools respect people's rights and values before they are approved.

Things to Think About

How can health ministries balance innovation with fairness and safety? What should happen if an AI system gives wrong advice or leaves out certain groups?

Interesting Facts

Over 80 countries have now adopted national digital health ethics frameworks. Many of them were built using WHO's guidance on fairness, transparency, and accountability.

¶ 22 – Anchor: "Ethics and governance of artificial intelligence for health"

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Glossary

Health data – Information about people's health, such as test results or vaccination records.

Ethics – Principles that help people decide what is right or wrong.

Governance – The system of rules and checks that makes sure technology is used safely and fairly.

¶ 29 – Anchor: "To facilitate the consistent incorporation of recommended clinical, public health and data practices into digital information systems"

Did You Know That…

SMART guidelines are digital rulebooks that help countries turn WHO's health recommendations into simple electronic tools. For example, if WHO updates a guideline for managing diabetes, the SMART version lets programmers build that rule into digital systems so doctors see the right advice on-screen. When AI tools are linked to SMART guidelines, they can help detect patterns and suggest next steps faster. However, countries must make sure AI follows these guidelines safely and does not replace human judgment.

Things to Think About

How can AI make global health guidance easier to use in daily care? What might go wrong if AI systems misread or misapply these digital rules?

Interesting Facts

More than 60 countries use SMART guideline tools to update their digital health systems. WHO plans to add AI-ready features that can track whether health workers follow the most recent recommendations.

Glossary

SMART guidelines – Digital versions of WHO recommendations that can be built directly into health software.

¶ 31 – Anchor: "Digital health and patient-centered healthcare"

Did You Know That…

AI has a role to play in the future care of patients as a component of digital health services. It can help doctors read X-rays, predict disease outbreaks, and manage hospital supplies. It can also remind patients to take medicines or follow care plans. Yet AI systems only work well when trained on complete and fair data. If most of the data come from one group of people, the AI might not perform well for others. This can lead to mistakes or bias in medical care. WHO advises countries to test AI carefully before using it in real clinics and to keep human review at every stage.

Things to Think About

When is it safe to let AI make health predictions on its own? Should AI be used to decide who gets treatment first, or should that always be a human choice?

Interesting Facts

Some hospitals now use AI chat systems to answer basic patient questions, which saves staff time but raises privacy questions about how patient data are stored.

Glossary

AI bias – When computer programs make unfair or inaccurate decisions because they learn from incomplete or unbalanced data.
Algorithm – A set of rules a computer follows to solve a problem or make a decision.

¶ 33 – Anchor: "Leveraging rapidly accelerating transformative technologies such as artificial intelligence "

Did You Know That…

As digital systems expand, WHO urges all countries to create clear rules for how AI can be used safely. This includes laws to protect privacy, stop misuse, and explain how automated decisions are made. Ethical oversight means checking not only if AI works but if it is fair, transparent, and respects human rights. AI can be a strong support for health systems—but only if people trust it and can understand how it works.

Things to Think About

Why is trust so important when using AI in health care? How can patients be sure that their data are secure and that AI tools are tested before use?

Interesting Facts

WHO is developing a Global AI Ethics Framework for Health, which will guide countries in designing fair and transparent systems that prevent harm and promote accountability.

Glossary

Ethical oversight – Regular checks to make sure new technologies follow moral and safety standards.

Transparency – When organizations clearly explain how their systems, including AI, make decisions or use data.