

Digital Health Promotion and Equity

Challenges and Potentials in a Transforming Health Landscape

Authors: Jessica Diez, Fiona Scolik, and Lisa Katharina Mayer

Organisation: Austrian National Public Health Institute (GÖG), Department Health, Society, and Equity



Main question: How can digital tools in health promotion foster inclusion instead of creating new barriers?

Definitions

Context

Digitalization is transforming all areas of life, including health and health promotion.

Digital tools (e.g. apps, wearables, online platforms) offer new opportunities for patient engagement, behaviour change, and outreach.

However, these innovations may also exacerbate existing health disparities, particularly among socially disadvantaged populations.

A report was written to extend foundational knowledge on digitalization, health promotion, and equity. Several best practices were identified, highlighting ways to design and implement inclusive digital interventions.

Digital Health Promotion

A process that empowers individuals to improve their health through digital tools, integrating user perspectives to ensure effectiveness and equity

Digital Health Equity

The equal opportunity for individuals to benefit from the knowledge and practices related to the development and use of digital technologies to improve health

State of the Art

Aspects of digital health promotion vary in terms of digital technologies used, target groups, settings, themes, approaches.

Individual factors and design-related features of digital tools influence social participation and the acceptance of digital health interventions.

These aspects should be considered in the development and implementation of digital health promotion to ensure that all population groups can equally benefit from the advantages of digital interventions.

The definitions were derived from literature and refined through the analysis of FGÖ-funded projects exploring digital health promotion and equity.

Potentials

Capacity Building
Personalisation & Engagement
Expanded Reach & Accessibility

Primary Care's Role

Digital health promotion in primary care can reduce inequalities when literacy gaps and access barriers are actively addressed.

Frameworks that integrate equity principles are essential for inclusive, accessible, and effective digital interventions.

Co-design and participatory methods must become standard practice to reflect the needs of diverse communities.

Challenges

Digital Divide
Evaluation Difficulties
Intervention-Generated Inequities

Reference: Scolik, Fiona; Diez, Jessica (2024): *Digitalisierung und Gesundheitsförderung. Wissensgrundlagen und FGÖ-Praxisbeispiele digitaler Gesundheitsförderung im Kontext der Chancengerechtigkeit*. Gesundheit Österreich, Wien.



QR code to report

