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German Israeli
Health Forum for
Artificial Intelligence

Report "GIHF-AI Conference 2023"

Health data use in Europe and Israel

The German Israeli Health Forum for Artificial Intelligence (GIHF-AI), an initiative of the European Leadership Network (ELNET), held its second annual conference on September 5-6 in Essen, partnering with the Big Bang Health Festival (BBH) on September 6-7. BBH brought together 1,500 participants to discuss the future of healthcare. Both the GIHF-AI conference and the BBH festival took place at the Colosseum Theater in Essen. GIHF-AI was part of the festival's program with a panel summing up the results of the GIHF-AI conference, a master class showcasing the implementation of innovation in Israel, and its "Spotlight Nation

Israel Area" where German and Israeli representatives were able to connect and foster future collaborations.

The following is a summary of the recommendations for action derived from the breakout sessions and panel discussions of the GIHF-AI conference. They aim to create a more transparent, efficient, and standardized healthcare data ecosystem, leveraging AI and data quality standards while simplifying processes for the benefit of both healthcare providers and patients. This publication provides political recommendations from the conference and summarizes the program.

FACTS, FIGURES, DATA ON THE GIHF-AI CONFERENCE 2023



- ▶ Two-day conference (September 5-6, 2023)
- ▶ Reception at Essen town hall at the invitation of Mayor Thomas Kufen
- ▶ Approximately 80 high-profile experts from Germany and Israel as well as France and Cyprus
- ▶ Partnered with Big Bang Health (BBH) on September 6-7, 2023, with around 1,500 participants
- ▶ Presentation of preliminary results of GIHF-AI study on trust in health data use in Israel and Germany by Dr. Yiska Weisband (Director Data Research Centers, Clalit Innovation)
- ▶ Keynotes by Ran Ridnik (Head of Directorate for Economics, Regulation and Innovation, Israel Ministry of Health) and Nick Schneider (Head of Division, New Technologies and Data Use, German Federal Ministry of Health)
- ▶ 3 breakout sessions followed by panel discussion
- ▶ Panel discussion on health data use in Israel, Germany, and Europe, moderated by Dr. Dennis Ballwieser (Managing Director & Editor, Wort & Bild Verlag)
- ▶ Update on EHDS and EU AI Act regulation by Dr. Yiannos Toliás (Legal Lead AI and AI Liability in Healthcare & EHDS Team, European Commission)

Recommendations for Action

Enhance Data Transparency and Health Literacy

Public **health literacy needs to be enhanced** by establishing clear guidelines that inform individuals about the purpose and handling of their data, ultimately **fostering trust and understanding**. It is crucial to advocate for greater transparency in the utilization of healthcare data and there should be efforts to finance, design, and disseminate educational programs tailored for all stakeholders.

Develop a Targeted Communication Campaign

To bolster **trust in medical AI among citizens, a targeted communication campaign** should be developed, highlighting noteworthy national use cases or success stories. This campaign should also emphasize a shift in communication, stressing that data has the potential to generate clinical benefits beyond its traditional role in research.

Facilitate Data Integration and Utilization

It is essential to establish a **comprehensive healthcare data ecosystem** by promoting and facilitating data linkage. This should involve integrating pre- and post-market surveillance data as well as real-life observation data, enhancing the quality of information available for more informed decision-making in healthcare.

Introduce Mediators and Innovation Officers

Mediators and innovation officers should be introduced within hospitals, serving as intermediaries between startups and healthcare institutions, to foster collaboration and innovation. Also, **opening access to a portion of anonymously collected health data** at no cost can facilitate research and development while maintaining privacy and ethical standards.

International Quality Label for Data

Efforts should be made to **support the creation of a globally recognized quality label**, potentially on the **ISO level**, with the purpose of evaluating and guaranteeing the quality and structure of healthcare data. Such an initiative would serve to **standardize data quality and bolster interoperability** across healthcare systems, ultimately leading to more effective and efficient data utilization in the healthcare industry.

Leverage AI for Unstructured Data

The **use of AI models** should be encouraged **for the analysis of unstructured healthcare data**, specifically text data. This would facilitate the extraction of valuable insights from a wide range of data sources, ultimately leading to better healthcare. The **implementation of training protocols for medical staff and students** is imperative to ensure their proficiency in utilizing AI effectively for improved patient care and medical decision-making.

Streamline Consent and Information Processes

It is essential to **simplify and streamline the consent and information requirements** for data sharing within healthcare to alleviate bureaucracy. This approach will promote efficient access to data while still ensuring individuals receive comprehensive information about its usage. The **institutionalization of training protocols** is necessary for public education, particularly concerning the utilization of AI, to enhance awareness and understanding among the broader population.

Establish Certification and Whitelisting

A **certification system should be implemented** with the aim of promoting consistent data management practices across various regulatory bodies. Alongside this, **whitelisting of products and services across regulators** needs to be contemplated to improve their accessibility and trustworthiness.

Bolster Data Security Efforts

Supplementary **resources to bolster data security efforts**, ensuring that data remains safeguarded against malicious usage, need to be allocated. **Thorough risk assessments and classification procedures** for products and services to better inform decision-making and regulatory measures need to be conducted.



Second GIHF-AI conference in partnership with Big Bang Health

Building on the successes of the first conference, which took place in Tel Aviv end of last year, the second GIHF-AI conference took place on September 5-6, 2023, with around **80 high-profile experts from Europe and Israel** at the Colosseum Theater Essen. The Israeli delegation to the conference consisted of around 30 representatives from the Israel Ministry of Health, startups, and innovation officers from healthcare institutions like hospitals and HMOs. The delegation was jointly organized with ELNET's second innovation initiative, the German Israeli Network of Startups & Mittelstand (GINSUM). It was supported by the Israeli Ministry of Health, Business Metropole Ruhr, and HealthIL. Immediately afterwards, the Big Bang Health festival with 1,500 guests took place with ELNET and its two innovation initiatives, GIHF-AI and GINSUM, as a strategic partner.

Conference reception and presentation of preliminary GIHF-AI study results

On the evening of September 5, the conference kicked off with a **reception at Essen town hall at the invitation of Mayor Thomas Kufen**. Greetings by the host and Prof. Dr. Julia Frohne (Chairwoman, Business Metropole Ruhr) were followed by the **presentation of preliminary results of the first GIHF-AI study** by Dr. Yiska Weisband (Director Data Research Centers, Clalit Innovation).

This unique **study on trust in health data use in Germany and Israel** is scientifically advised and chaperoned by Prof. Dr. Sylvia Thun (Director CEI, BIH @ Charité) and Prof. Dr. Ran Balicer (Chief Innovation Officer and Deputy-DG, Clalit Health Services). The presented survey, serving as base of the study, was conducted by Dr. Alexander Schachinger (CEO, EPatient Analytics GmbH) and Kantar Global served as consumer panel provider. The **project timeline was May until July 2023 with 1,219 German and 833 Israeli citizens surveyed**. The questionnaire included

socio-demographics, data on usage of digital health apps, wearables, and medical devices, as well as the willingness to share data. Initially it was suspected that Israelis are less concerned with their privacy regarding data sharing compared to Germans. However, this has never been assessed methodologically before in another well-defined study. The survey had just been completed before the conference and the full analysis is still in process. What can be said now is that there are **obvious differences in adoption between the countries, but they are less extreme than expected**.¹

Dr. Weisband exemplarily presented some of the questions asked in the survey such as: "You can measure steps, heart rate, or health data with apps and mobile phones. The apps and devices are often from abroad and collect this health data there. Did you know that?", with 50 percent of Germans and 64 percent of Israelis answering positively. The question "Research into new treatments for diseases is difficult. Our data from apps, mobile phones or our files with our doctors can help research. Did you know that?", resulted in 41 percent of Germans and 53 percent of Israelis answering "yes".²

The question "Bringing together people's health data from mobile phones and apps may not always be easy. How would you prefer to hand over your data? My data can flow automatically to my health insurance company.", led to 49 percent of Germans and 64 percent of Israelis answering yes. Finally, "What do you think of this idea: Independent medical research uses our cell phone data anonymously and with our permission to improve treatments and healthy lifestyles?", resulted in 57 percent of Germans and 68 percent of Israelis answering "yes". The fact that **Germans are far more educated about and open to health data use than expected** by many health experts, policymakers, and data protection officers in Germany should lead to a more lenient health data use policy focusing on the **benefits of health data use rather than the risks**. Israel serves as a good example for this benefit-oriented regulatory approach.³

GIHF-AI conference panels and workshops: Communication and international cooperation

The conference day on September 6, 2023, marked two keynote speeches by Nick Schneider (Head of Division, New Technologies and Data Use, German Federal Ministry of Health) and Ran Ridnik (Head of Directorate for Economics, Regulation and Innovation, Israel Ministry of Health) who both emphasized the importance of international cooperation in digital health. They presented their countries' newly published draft laws such as **Germany's Health Data Use Law (GDNG)** and **Digital Act** as well as **Israel's Data Portability Act**. After two years, **GIHF-AI has established itself as both an interactive forum and a facilitator of cooperation agreements** between German and Israeli University hospitals which was highly welcomed by Schneider and Ridnik. Although **Israel is way more advanced than Germany** regarding the digitalization of its health-care system, both countries **face similar challenges** regarding regulatory questions. Amongst them is the **fast pace of technological progress**, the matter of integrating **interoperable data standards** as well as the question of how to render **health data use more patient-centric, innovation-fostering, and benefit-oriented** whilst **safeguarding highest data protection and security standards**.

The following panel discussion with Dr. Axelle Menu-Branthomme (Medical Expert, Health Data Hub France), Dr. Steffen Heß (Head of Health Data Lab Germany, BfArM), Liat Nadai Arad (Chief Transformation Officer, Head of I-Metadata AI Center, Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center), and Prof. Dr. Jochen Werner (CEO, University Hospital Essen) on health data use in Israel, Germany, and Europe, was moderated by Dr. Dennis Ballwieser (Managing Director & Editor, Wort & Bild Verlag). **Dr. Menu-Branthomme enriched the discussion on health data use with the French perspective** and voiced interest to join the German Israeli Forum to further collaboration and to find answers regarding the implementation of a European Health Data Space (EHDS) and the EU AI Act. In his keynote, **Dr. Yiannos Toliás** (Legal Lead AI and AI Liability in Healthcare & EHDS Team, European Commission), **updated the audience on**

the developments of the EHDS and EU AI Act regulations.

Three interactive **breakout sessions on regulation, medical collaboration as well as innovation and market access** formed the core of the conference and led to the policy recommendations above. Participants were asked to develop policy recommendations and action points which were presented by the Heads of Tables at the concluding panel, moderated by Carsten Ovens (CEO, ELNET in Germany): Ronya Rubinstein (Co-CEO, Comns) and Philip Kopf (COO, QuR.digital)–heading the Policy Table; Dr. Anke Diehl (CTO, University Hospital Essen) and Liat Nadai Arad (CTO, Head of I-Metadata AI Center, Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center)–heading the Medical Collaboration Table; and Yoav Fisher (Head of Technological Innovation and Digital Health, Health-IL), and Prof. Dr. Christian Sina (Director of the Institute of Nutritional Medicine, University Hospital Schleswig-Holstein) – heading the Innovation & Market Access Table. Although the sessions had different focusses, one recommendation was equally emphasized by all three: The importance of **improving health data literacy** and **the understanding of the benefits of health data use** by **initiating communication campaigns**.

Summary and Outlook

The GIHF-AI Conference 2023 further strengthened relations between German and Israeli digital health experts, adding perspectives from France and the EU to the discussion. **Israel is known as one of the most advanced countries regarding the application of AI in healthcare**, with a broad **variety of digital health startups**. Israel possesses electronic patient records of 99 percent of the population, resulting from the digitalizing process which began in the 1990s, whereas Germany is only now paving the way for a similar EMR system, the ePA (electronic patient record). Yet, **similar regulatory questions** and the **great interest to cooperate in the field of digital health** lead to an ever-growing understanding of the **benefits of bilateral cooperation in digital health**. Three of the key takeaways of the conference are that **broad communication is key**

to gaining trust and cooperation of societies with regard to sharing health data. Secondly, the **majority of people in Germany and Israel are willing to share their health data** – regulators should keep this in mind. Thirdly, there needs to be a **shift from data protection to safe data usage**. In the coming months, GIHF-AI will further this collaboration through more digital health roundtables, shared conferences, and the extension to more European countries to focus on the EHDS and the EU AI Act even stronger. Furthermore, the final results of the GIHF-AI study will be published shortly and distributed amongst policymakers in Europe and Israel.

Bibliography

1. **Weisband, Dr. Yiska:** "Trust in health data use in Germany and Israel – a comparison GIHF-AI study", 05.09.2023.
2. **Ibid.**
3. **Ibid.**

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GIHF-AI is an initiative by ELNET-Germany, a think tank and network organization in the context of German-Israeli relations. We work independently and across party lines on the basis of shared democratic interests and values. Bet-

ter mutual understanding is promoted through networking and information exchange. Since its founding in 2007, ELNET has focused its work on the topics of foreign and security policy, antisemitism, and innovation.

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Date: 23.10.2023