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German Israeli
Health Forum for
Artificial Intelligence

Report "GIHF-AI Conference 2024"

Revisiting Three Years of German Israeli Digital Health Cooperation

On June 24-25, 2024, the German Israeli Health Forum for Artificial Intelligence (GIHF-AI), an initiative of the European Leadership Network (ELNET), held its third annual conference in Berlin. More than 120 German and Israeli medical professionals, patient advocates, policymakers, as well as stakeholders from the digital health business ecosystem gathered for

two days to discuss digital health and AI regulation, develop project ideas, and form new bonds. This publication summarizes the program and provides political recommendations derived from the keynotes, breakout sessions on "Digital Mental Health", "Ethics and Trust in AI", as well as "Health & Data Literacy", and panel discussions of the GIHF-AI conference.

FACTS AND FIGURES ON THE GIHF-AI CONFERENCE 2024



- ▶ Two-day conference (June 24-25, 2024) at the Veterinary Anatomy Theater (TAT)
- ▶ Reception at the Lecture Hall Ruin of the Charité (BMM) in cooperation with the State Chancellery of Saxony, including musical accompaniment by the *Singing Shrinks*
- ▶ Approximately 120 high-profile experts and policymakers from Germany and Israel
- ▶ Presentation of GIHF-AI Study 2.0 "Artificial Intelligence and Digital Health: Applications and Framework Conditions - An overview of AI-based areas of application for citizen-centered solutions and their current opportunities and challenges"
- ▶ Keynotes by German Federal Minister of Health Prof. Dr. Karl Lauterbach, MP, Esti Shelly (Director, Digital Health, Israeli Ministry of Health), and Prof. Dr. Ronni Gamzu (CEO, Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center)
- ▶ 3 Breakout Sessions: "Ethics & Trust in AI", "Digital Mental Health", "Health & Data Literacy"
- ▶ GIHF-AI Hot Seat Debate with Prof. Dr. Ronni Gamzu
- ▶ Panel on "The EU AI Act and its practical implications"
- ▶ AI & Nursing: Debate & Live Recording of the "MehrEinsatzWagen" Podcast

Recommendations for Action

Data Flow

Data must flow efficiently and securely across all relevant stakeholders, including mental health data, to maximize health policy benefits and AI use. Transparency, self-sufficiency for patients, and informed decision-making need to be ensured. Data protection and data usage need to be balanced (cost-benefit analysis).

Health, Data, and AI Literacy

Citizens and patients need to be educated about the benefits of health data sharing and the use of AI to improve health and data literacy. There should be an accessible, easy-to-understand, and centralized information infrastructure that supports health data literacy (HDL). Independent experts, social media outlets, and influencers may be appointed to serve as strategists and communication channels to help increase people's literacy.

Trustworthy and Ethical Use of AI

Trust, explainability, and human-centric design are crucial for responsible integration of AI. Definitions of trust and trustworthiness need to be clear. Transparency in operations and user-centric approaches may maximize societal benefits. Self-regulation based on global best practices, ethical data use, and integrating human oversight for reliable AI operation are essential for responsible AI deployment and societal acceptance.

Interdisciplinarity and Ethical Training

Advocate for interdisciplinary teams in AI development and the regulatory process, as well as international collaboration, while strengthening ethical skills in technical education. Combine technical and ethical training in regulatory frameworks.

AI Governance and the EU AI Act

The EU AI Act will affect the already heavily regulated healthcare sector. Therefore, there should be thoughtful implementation and the development of harmonization standards to ensure AI applications in healthcare are consistent with existing regulations. AI governance in healthcare must be integrated with other global AI regulations, sector-specific and agile to avoid conflicts and support international cooperation.

Regulatory Sandboxes and Frameworks for AI

For health and medical applications, one needs to emphasize the need for explainable AI, advocate for regulatory sandboxes in university hospitals to test AI safety and stress the importance of a human intermediary in AI decision support. Advocating for international collaboration in developing regulatory frameworks involving startups and domain experts is essential for fostering innovation while ensuring responsible governance of emerging technologies.

AI in Mental Healthcare

Integrating AI into mental healthcare requires comprehensive regulation, the development of specific evaluation metrics for mental health, personalized tool deployment, effective data analysis, and the use of AI for population health monitoring. These steps will enhance the efficacy, safety, and equity of AI applications in mental health, which can greatly benefit patients.

Education and Communication

The purpose of health data use and AI use should always be transparent. Developing clear communication strategies, enhancing patient access to health data, integrating health literacy education, involving stakeholders in policymaking, and fostering innovation through competition is key.

Accelerator Program and Pilot Program

Setting up accelerator and pilot programs like in Israel can significantly contribute to advancing initiatives in digital health. Both initiatives are valuable for fostering innovation, driving impact, ensuring successful deployment, and increasing access for citizens and patients.



Third GIHF-AI Conference in Berlin

GIHF-AI Conference Reception

Prof. Dr. Ronni Gamzu, CEO of the Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center (Ichilov) and GIHF-AI Board of Trustees member, opened the conference with a keynote speech in the historical Charité Lecture Hall Ruin of the Berliner Medizinhistorisches Museum (BMM). He revisited three years of Israeli-German health cooperation. Prof. Gamzu mentioned emerging partnership possibilities, such as the first joint R&D initiatives arising from GIHF-AI and stressed that **Germany's and Israel's health systems have complementary strengths that need to be utilized**. Prof. Gamzu mentioned the recent successful Hackathon between University Hospital Schleswig-Holstein (UKSH) and Ichilov, which sprung from the signing of a Letter of Intent between the hospitals in 2023, facilitated with the help of GIHF-AI. **More cooperation** like this **would be beneficial for both countries**, and he encouraged other hospitals to follow suit. Afterward, pitches by Israeli digital mental health startups Seegnal (Eyal Schneid, CEO), Taliatz (Dr. Dekel Taliatz, CEO), and Innoccu (Shay Dagan, Chief of Product) presented the variety of the ecosystem.

GIHF-AI Conference Keynotes and Panels

On the second day, **German Federal Minister of Health Prof. Dr. Karl Lauterbach MP** opened the conference with a keynote speech. He commented on the **tremendous benefits of healthcare cooperation between Israel and Germany for the advancement of health around the globe**. Minister Lauterbach started by expressing his solidarity with the Israeli people on behalf of the German government. He spoke about his Ministry delegation to Israel on AI in healthcare, adding a personal note: **"I remember sitting with Ran Balicer, drawing on a napkin what later became German law."** Minister Lauterbach emphasized the importance of strong relations with Israel, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, where not only Germany profited highly from Israel's research, but the whole world. According to the minister, the **collaboration**

agreements between university hospitals signed in the wake of the program were one of GIHF-AI's major achievements, since progress could not be achieved by only talking but rather by working together. Furthermore, Prof. Lauterbach presented Germany's AI strategy. According to him, ensuring universal access to electronic health records (EHR) with opt-out options, leveraging AI for data completeness, and empowering patients with their health data represents a transformative approach to healthcare delivery. He pointed out that the development and use of large language models (LLMs), AI-driven solutions for rare diseases, and augmented care hold promise for revolutionizing healthcare delivery.

Following the German minister, **Esti Shelly**, Director of the Digital Health Unit in the Israeli Ministry of Health, gave a keynote on "Advancing Digital Care – Israel's Digital Health Journey during Crisis". She started by **praising the fruitful collaboration between Israel and Germany** during the three years of GIHF-AI. Her presentation was about Israel's response to the **events of October 7**, which led her ministry to put a **special focus on mental health**. Shelly stressed the ministry's strong cooperation with Israel's Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) to foster innovative solutions in mental healthcare. Furthermore, a special emphasis was laid on the **continuity of care, establishing a seamless data flow continuum with standardized, high-quality data across social work and mental healthcare**, ensuring comprehensive and effective support for individuals. At the same time, rehabilitation services received a greater focus. Through incentive programs and pilot programs, the Ministry engaged Israel's health ecosystem to create innovative solutions. Both the COVID-19 pandemic and October 7 led the country to put a stronger focus on mental healthcare and digital mental healthcare, which is one of the reasons the conference had a strong focus on these topics.

A GIHF-AI **Hot Seat debate with Prof. Ronni Gamzu** about the benefits of data use in Israel and responding to healthcare crises followed. He stressed that to deal with huge crises like the pandemic, one needs

to put one's ego aside when making important decisions, referring to his role as Israel's "Covid Zar". Gamzu pointed out that one needs professionals to deal with crises, not only politicians, to gain the trust of citizens. Regarding data use, **Israel's data exchange platform between all relevant stakeholders** (hospitals, HMOs) which was introduced already in 2012 **was crucial for the continued data flow** which benefited the vaccination development during the COVID-19 pandemic. Too much focus on data privacy would have made this impossible. Ronni Gamzu concluded by underlining Minister Lauterbach's statement, stressing the importance of practical cooperation between institutions and suggesting the importance of introducing KPIs for every cooperation between German and Israeli hospitals.

The presentation of the **GIHF-AI Study 2.0** "Artificial Intelligence and Digital Health: Applications and Framework Conditions - **An overview of AI-based areas of application for citizen-centered solutions and their current opportunities and challenges**"¹ by **Dr. Alexander Schachinger** (CEO, E-Patient Analytics) and **Prof. Dr. Sylvia Thun** (Director, Core Unit eHealth and Interoperability, Charité Berlin) and **Prof. Dr. Ran Balicer** (CIO & Deputy-DG, Clalit Health Services) followed. The study highlights the benefits of AI in medicine by mapping use cases. It stresses the need for effective regulation to build trust among the public and medical professionals. The **EU AI Act** is a positive step, according to the authors, but lacks comprehensive measures for integrating AI with electronic health records and patient data, impacting interoperability among health IT providers. The **study advocates for regulatory adjustments at European and national levels** and for reducing bureaucracy for medical professionals through AI to address workforce shortages. The authors call for **interdisciplinary collaboration** among stakeholders in healthcare to foster innovation and suggest **increased communication about AI applications** to build trust and improve health literacy.

A panel discussion on "**The EU AI Act and its practical implications**" with **Prof. Dr. Karl Broich** (CEO, BfArM), **Nicole Formica-Schiller** (CEO & Founder, Pamanicor Health), **Beatrice Kluge** (Head of Inter-

national Partnerships, gematik), **Limor Shmerling Magazanik** (Tech Policy - Privacy, Data Governance & Digital Security, OECD), and **Dr. Neomi Siegal** (Head of Medical Technologies Division, Maccabi Health Care Services) was next on the agenda. The consensus was that a **regulatory framework would be beneficial** but that the **EU AI Act would affect the already heavily regulated healthcare sector**. Therefore, there should be thoughtful implementation and the development of harmonization standards across EU borders to ensure AI applications in healthcare are consistent with existing regulations. **AI governance in healthcare must be integrated with other global AI regulations, sector-specific and agile to avoid conflicts and support international cooperation**. Developing use cases and testing them quickly may lead to a system in which innovation and regulation go together.

Breakout Sessions

The breakout session on "**Digital Mental Health**" with **Prof. Dr. Malek Bajbouj** (Director of International Affairs, Charité Berlin) and **Prof. Dr. Arad Kodesh** (Head of Mental Health Services, Meuhedet) included impulses by **Nora Blum** (Founder, Selfapy), **Dr. Lars Hunze** (Deputy Head of Division, German Federal Ministry of Health), **Revital Ordan** (Director of Ambulatory Mental Health Services, Israel Ministry of Health), and **Dr. Dekel Taliaz** (CEO, Taliaz). It involved discussions on the DIGA model in Germany, which was recently applied in Israel, suggesting **using AI to continuously analyze real-life data** (like sleep quality, heart rate, and anxiety levels), and provide insights to therapists, as well as employing **AI to monitor overall population health for government use**. The workshop participants suggested that enhancing AI regulation, developing specific mental health metrics, tailoring digital tools to patient needs, using AI for data insights, and employing AI for population health monitoring would lead to trustworthy and effective Digital Mental Health tools.

The breakout session on "**Ethics and Trust in AI**" with **Dr. Anke Diehl** (CTO, University Medicine Essen) and **Dr. Gal Goshen** (Chief AI Officer, Sheba)

commenced with a presentation by **Elisabeth Liebert** (Digital Transformation Unit, University Medicine Essen), who had co-authored the GIHF-AI publication "Ethical guidelines for AI in medicine"² in preparation of the workshop. In summary, the participants agreed that to **responsibly integrate AI into society, trust, explainability, and human-centric design are essential**. Clear **definitions** of trust and transparency, ethical data use, human oversight, and interdisciplinary collaboration are vital. For health applications, **emphasize explainable AI, regulatory sandboxes** in hospitals, and **human intermediaries** in AI decision support. International collaboration in developing regulatory frameworks is crucial for balancing innovation with responsible governance.

The breakout session on "**Health & Data Literacy**" with **Birgit Bauer** (Project Coordinator and Founder, Data Saves Lives Germany; Patient Expert) and **Roi Shternin** (Founder & CPO, Chronically; Patient Expert) included an impulse by **Dr. Sigal Shafran Tikva** (Director R&I Center in Nursing, Hadassah University Hospital). It stressed the importance of putting the patient experience first to gain sustainable adoption of health data use. In summary, **citizens and patients need to be educated about the benefits of health data sharing and the use of AI** to improve health and data literacy, according to the workshop group. There should be an **accessible, easy-to-understand, and centralized information infrastructure** that supports health data literacy (HDL).

The results of the workshops, with policy recommendations and action points, were presented at the end of the conference with the help of **graphic recordings by Manuel Recker** (attached).

Live Podcast "Nursing & AI: From egosystem to ecosystem"

"From egoystem to ecosystem", meaning how im-

portant the inclusion of nurses into all processes regarding digital health and AI is, was the strong message of the live podcast by "MehrEinsatzWagen" on "**Nursing & AI: Changing roles in participatory healthcare systems**". **Prof. Dr. Thomas Fischer** (Researcher, ehs Dresden), **Mina Luetkens** (Founder & CEO, Patients4Digital) and **Dr. Sigal Shafran Tikva** (Director R&I Center in Nursing, Hadassah University Hospital) discussed with the moderator and initiator of the podcast, **Dr. Tobias Gantner** (Founder & CEO, HealthCareFuturists), how technology can be used to improve patients' care and that **patients need to have more agency** over their health journey. Furthermore, the panelists stressed the importance of a **teaching curriculum, that motivates nurses to think creatively and innovatively**.

Summary and Outlook

To conclude, the third conference of the German Israeli Health Forum for Artificial Intelligence (GIHF-AI), funded by the German Federal Ministry of Health, summed up three years of strong cooperation between Germany's and Israel's digital health ecosystems. It included close collaboration between both Ministries of Health, several university hospitals, HMOs, and other institutional stakeholders. The **interdisciplinarity, innovation spirit, and willingness to learn and develop together could be felt throughout the conference**. To continue and enhance the cooperation between both countries, ELNET aims to extend its activities within the framework of GIHF-AI to more European countries. At the same time, a special effort is laid upon the extension of collaboration between Israeli and German university hospitals and other relevant healthcare institutions. The **existing partnerships have proven to be highly beneficial**, which is why ELNET partners with the State of Saxony in the second half of 2024 to connect healthcare institutions and professionals from Saxony with Israel's digital health and AI ecosystem. Further states may follow suit.

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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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