



# AI and mental health: a human rights perspective



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# About Mental Health Europe



European non-governmental network organisation committed to the promotion of positive mental health, the prevention of mental distress, the improvement of mental health care.

MHE works closely with the European Institutions and international bodies to mainstream mental health in all policies and end mental health stigma.



## Our vision

A Europe where everyone's mental health and wellbeing flourish across their life course.



## Our mission

To lead in advancing a human rights, community-based, recovery-oriented and psychosocial approach to mental health and well-being for all.



## Mental health care: the digital revolution

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There is an expanding use of algorithmic and data driven technologies in the mental health care field.



# AI and mental health care: key concerns

➤ **Quality**

➤ **Privacy & data security**

➤ **Equity**

➤ **Business models driven by profit rather than commitment to public wellbeing**

➤ **Technosolutionism**

➤ **Care devalued**

➤ **Human rights pitfalls**

*‘The use of technologies like AI to make assumptions and judgements about who we are, and who we will become is much more than a potential invasion of privacy; it is an existential threat to human autonomy.’ (Digital Futures in mind)*

# AI in mental health care: human rights pitfalls

“There are potential serious negative consequences if human rights obligations are not prioritized by those who fund, design, regulate or use AI technologies for health”. WHO

Right to non-discrimination

Right to access to information  
& informed consent

Right to non-discrimination

Right to an effective  
remedy and fair trial

## Human dignity

Humans are valued for  
their personal data  
rather than their  
intrinsic worth

## Personal autonomy

Lack of control over  
personal health data

Continuous surveillance

Not always possible to be  
informed in full about the steps  
of the decision-making process  
(black box).

## Trust

Even the best AI systems may  
sometimes make mistakes

AI is only as good as the data it uses

Lack of protection of personal health  
data

Difficulty for users to understand how  
AI functions and makes medical  
decisions

# AI and mental health – Beyond health care



The impact on mental health of algorithmically curated content on social media



Facebook wellness checks

# Our vision: human-rights and co-creation as guiding principles

Digitalisation not as an end in itself, but a means to an end.

Move the emphasis away from the technology itself and rather ask:

Who benefits from it?

Who stands to lose?

Digital technologies to be applied not just because they are feasible, but because they **respond to a real need**.

How?

By hearing the voice of all the interested actors. By using the **human rights framework**, the **psychosocial model** and the **co-creation approach** as compass to solve any current or future dilemmas.

People with lived experience need to be involved in shaping the systems meant to support them (**Nothing about us without us**).

Real innovation lies not just in technological advancements but in the way we approach mental health care in our communities (social innovation).





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# Resources

- ‘Mental health in the digital age – Applying a human rights based, psychosocial approach as compass’

<https://www.mhe-sme.org/mhe-releases-digitalisation-report/>

- Growing Digital Ecosystems for Mental Health Support for People and Society: Understanding the Role of EU Law and Policy

<https://www.mhe-sme.org/growing-digital-ecosystems-for-mental-health/>

- “Digital Futures in Mind: Reflecting on Technological Experiments in Mental Health and Crisis Support”

<https://automatingmentalhealth.cc/media/pages/digital-futures-in-mind-report/ba660f37e9-1662080126/digital-futures-in-mind-report-aug-2022-final.pdf>

- The mHealth Power Paradox: Improving Data Protection in Health Apps through Self-Regulation in the European Union

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359799676\\_The\\_mHealth\\_Power\\_Paradox\\_Improving\\_Data\\_Protection\\_in\\_Health\\_Apps\\_through\\_Self-Regulation\\_in\\_the\\_European\\_Union](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359799676_The_mHealth_Power_Paradox_Improving_Data_Protection_in_Health_Apps_through_Self-Regulation_in_the_European_Union)

- EU Regulation Of Artificial Intelligence: Challenges For Patients’ Rights

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3997366](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3997366)

- The Council of Europe’s AI Convention (2023–2024): Promises and pitfalls for health protection

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0168851023002208>