

# **Digitalization of mental health systems in Europe:**

## **WHO perspective**

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## Mental health and systems

- High prevalence of stress, mental health conditions and psychosocial disability
- Low access & coverage, leading to high treatment gap / unmet need
- Low levels of priority, investment, human resources and innovation
- Low mental health literacy, leading to high stigma & discrimination plus low self-care / help-seeking

## Digital health and systems

- Large array of existing and potential digital innovations and technologies
- Huge opportunities exist to extend access and coverage to those in need
- Variable / uncertain quality and transferability of available products
- Low uptake in many countries (esp. LMIC) due to investment costs, regulatory issues and lack of know-how

# Digital mental health: challenges, needs & opportunities

Issue	Challenges	Needs and opportunities
1. <b>Utility</b>	Digital solutions designed without enough regard to end use(r)	End-user & other stakeholder involvement in design and evaluation (e.g. eMEN project!)
2. <b>Quality</b>	Evidence (costs, effects, implementation outcomes); Control (standards, criteria, accreditation)	Development / promotion of criteria for service developers, users and providers to assess quality (e.g. apps)
3. <b>Capacity</b>	Speed of technological change outpaces absorptive capacity	Investment in digital health literacy and skills of mental health workforce
4. <b>Privacy</b>	Data protection / service user confidentiality; cross-border issues	International guidance for policy-makers, regulators and providers

# Players and partnerships

## Developers, designers & researchers:

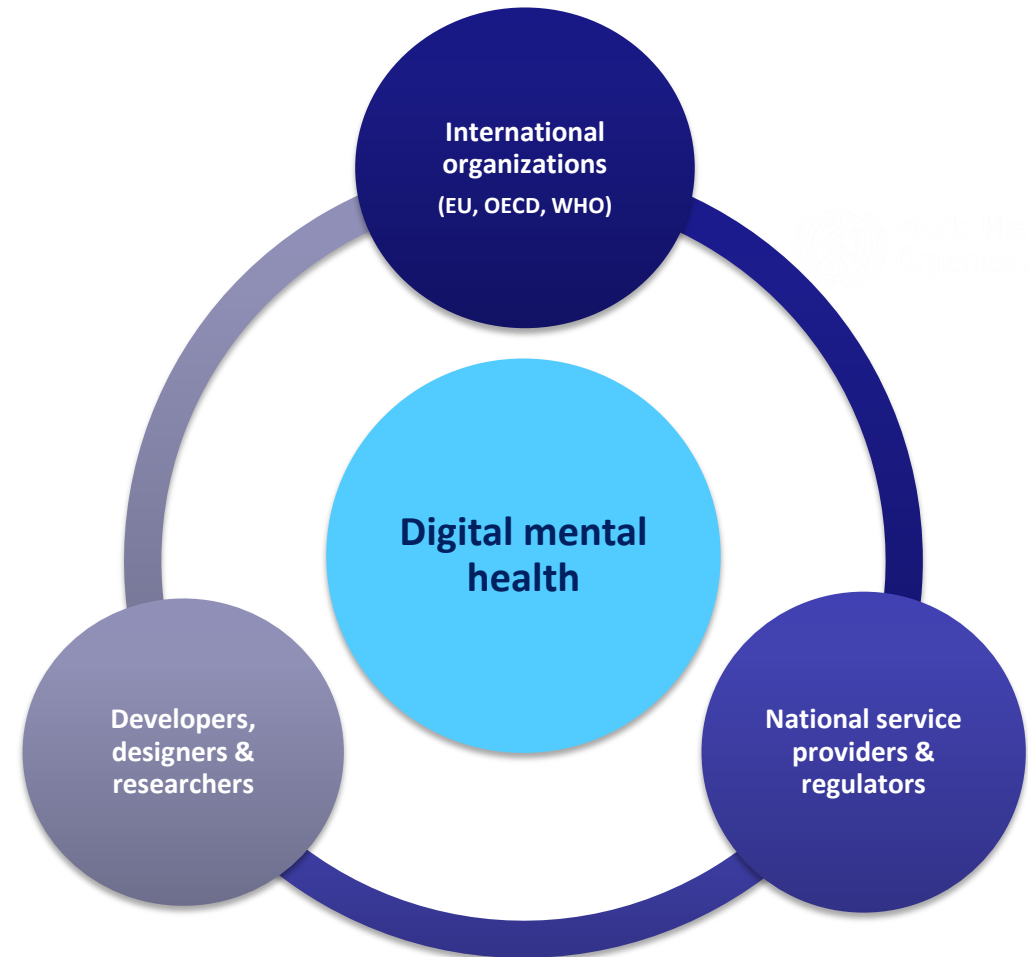
- Digital innovation (design, development)
- Research & evaluation (e.g. need, efficacy)

## National service providers & regulators:

- Adaptation / contextualization
- Capacity-building (workforce)
- Data protection / user confidentiality

## International organizations:

- Normative guidance / standard-setting
- Need assessment / horizon- scanning
- Technical support to countries



# WHO developments in digital health: policy

## Global

- Development of a global digital health strategy (2020)

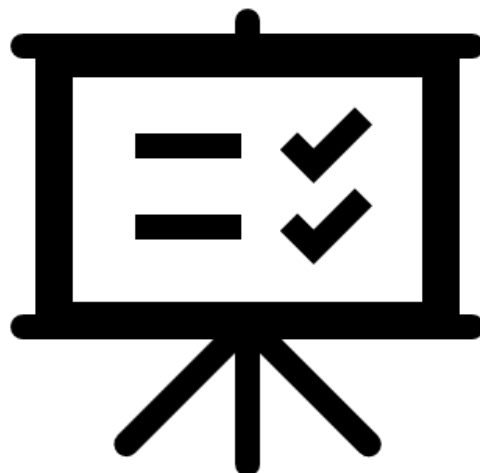
## European Region

- Initiative on digitalization of health systems (2018 onwards)
- Symposia on the future of digital health systems (Feb 2019; March 2020)
- European roadmap for the digitalization of national health systems, which seeks to operationalize the global strategy by addressing key factors & drivers of successful scale-up (Regional Committee, 2020)

# WHO developments in digital health: practice

- **Development**: e-versions of scalable interventions (e.g. mhGAP; STARS for adolescents)
- **Training**: e-learning and e-portals (e.g. QualityRights; EQUIP; iSupport for dementia)
- **Surveillance**: Online tools for monitoring & surveillance (e.g. self-harm; coercive practices)
- **Guidance**: structured advice / guidance to countries on options for and implications of digitalisation

# Thank you



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