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Abstracts

Bridging the Digital Divide: Ethical AI Implementation for Global SRHR Equity

by Stephany Oliveros, SheAI

Artificial Intelligence is transforming every aspect of society, but its impact on sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) is especially profound. From chatbots answering sensitive questions, to predictive models improving maternal care, AI offers unprecedented opportunities to enhance access, autonomy, and equity in health. But with that potential comes a critical need for reflection and responsibility. In this talk, Stephany Oliveros, CEO and co-founder of SheAI, examines the near future of AI through the lens of SRHR. Drawing from the latest developments in generative AI, agent-based systems, and ethical design, she weaves together global examples with urgent insights. What does it mean when an AI system trained on biased data starts giving health advice? Who owns your reproductive data when it's collected through an app? And what happens when misinformation is delivered with algorithmic confidence? We explore both sides of this dual-edged transformation. On one hand, AI can be a powerful tool for marginalized communities: it can provide private, stigma-free education, offer assistance in local languages, and extend care to remote or underserved areas. On the other, if developed without inclusiveness and caution, these same tools can entrench bias, spread disinformation, and violate privacy on a mass scale. The near future is likely to bring even greater changes: virtual health agents capable of autonomous support, AI-driven fertility tracking integrated into wearables, and AI-powered platforms reshaping medical research and resource distribution. As the landscape evolves, so must our frameworks for safety, ethics, and justice. Stephany proposes a path forward rooted in four pillars: equity in design, ethical guardrails, inclusive education, and cross-sectoral policy. She calls for greater collaboration between technologists and SRHR experts, and stresses the importance of involving the communities these tools aim to serve. This talk is a call to action, not just to adopt AI, but to shape it with care. If we want a future where AI enhances SRHR instead of undermining it, we must build technologies that reflect diverse realities, protect autonomy, and restore trust. The decisions we make now will define whether AI becomes an ally in the fight for sexual and reproductive justice, or another system of control.

Will AI make us more (in)sane? Clinical LLMs and Bots in Mental Health: Challenges and Chances

by Lea Maria Schäfer, Clare&Me

Despite ongoing advocacy, SRHR services remain unequal and stigmatized, particularly for women and adolescents (Ouahid et al., 2023). Artificial intelligence (AI) holds significant potential to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) globally (Balaji et al., 2022). AI applications span patient-facing tools, practitioner support, and training simulations (Stade et al., 2023). This talk highlights key use cases, including patient-facing tools (e.g., chatbots offering confidential information), practitioner-facing support (e.g., clinical guidance), and training tools (e.g., AI-simulated patient interactions) (Stade et al., 2023), focusing on chatbots. Chatbots, such as Tia (US), Nivi (Kenya, India), and SophieBot (Kenya), show great potential in supporting care and information access (Balaji et al., 2022) by offering low-threshold emotional support, delivering information on contraception, pregnancy, menstrual health, and abortion access. They have the potential to offer education, information, and reliable support, connections to services (Mills et al., 2023). Also, they give way to stigma-free “zone for reflections” less linked to discrimination and shame (Eichenberg, 2007). Conversational AI can reach underserved populations who avoid traditional care due to cost, stigma, or limited access (Fiske et al., 2019; Sedlakova & Trachsel, 2023); however, the evidence for chatbots in SRHR is still limited (Balaji et al., 2022; Mills et al., 2023). Large language models (LLMs), which power many chatbots, raise challenges around misinformation and accuracy risks, cultural and legal sensitivities, bias, privacy, psychological safety, and ethical boundaries (Stade et al., 2023; Starke et al., 2024). Clinical LLMs like Clare or Slingshot require high ethical standards, with safeguards against AI misuse and poor relational design (Schäfer, 2024). Responsible, inclusive design with clinical oversight is essential for safe integration into the SRHR ecosystem.

Co-developing an AI-powered Medical Chatbot for Midwives in Zanzibar

by Leah Bohle, Swiss TPH

MAM*AI is a novel AI-enabled clinical chat bot for nurses providing midwifery care in Zanzibar. To improve maternal and newborn health outcomes the provision of highest quality of care is needed. Nurses in Zanzibar receive only limited midwifery training while providing the full range of maternal and newborn health care. Access to evidence-based resources is scarce. We are co-developing an evidence-based chat bot powered by artificial intelligence to support informed clinical decision making in real time. The solution is designed in close collaboration with our end-users and together with our partners LiGHT at EPFL, D-tree and Swiss TPH.

How Young People Can Navigate Safely in Virtual Spaces – insights from Zimbabwe

by Rumbidzai Mashawiro, terres des hommes schweiz

This presentation delves into the intersection of virtual spaces and youth mental health, specifically highlighting the unique experiences of young people in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. As digital platforms become essential to youth engagement, understanding their impact on mental health is vital, especially in contexts where traditional support systems may be insufficient. The presentation will explore how youth navigate these virtual environments, the influence of social media on their mental health perceptions, and the emerging role of AI companions, including both risks and benefits. Key themes will include the positive and negative effects of online spaces on mental health among young people. By spotlighting local experiences, this presentation aims to enrich the broader discourse on mental health and technology, providing valuable insights for practitioners, educators, and policymakers committed to enhancing youth well-being in an increasingly digital landscape.

Mentoring for Inclusive Innovation: Enhancing a Digital SRHR App to Improve Access for Deaf Youth in Uganda

by Lisa Hilmi, The Core Group, Joseph Akoli, Diversity Innovations Initiative and Marie-Ange Goux, Handicap International

As part of the Core Group's Third Pitch Challenge, awarded in 2024 to the Organization of Persons with Disabilities, Disability Innovation Initiatives (DIV), this year-long mentorship aims to strengthen the development and visibility of DIV's innovative mobile application, Diversity Health. The app is designed to provide Deaf persons and persons with hearing impairments in Uganda—including both refugees and host communities—with accessible sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information, as well as links to Deaf-friendly healthcare and gender-based violence (GBV) services. The Diversity Health app features a growing library of video content on SRHR, maternal health, HIV, and GBV prevention, delivered in Uganda, DRC, South Sudan, and Burundi Sign Languages. It also connects users with trained health workers, GBV officers, and counselors who are proficient in Sign Language. Marie-Ange GOUX, the assigned mentor, brings over 20 years of experience in SRHR and protection and currently works with Humanity & Inclusion (HI) in Uganda. Her support focuses on strengthening the app's design, promoting its use among Deaf and hard-of-hearing users, and engaging national stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health. In March 2025, DIV successfully trained Ministry teleoperators to use the app and better serve Deaf communities.

Co-designed and Safe: Digital SRHR Platforms for Adolescents in Resource-limited Settings

by Laura Ruckstuhl, SolidarMed

Adolescents in resource-limited settings face significant barriers to accessing reliable sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) information due to stigma and a lack of trusted resources. Digital platforms offer transformative opportunities to bridge these gaps, although they also bring challenges such as misinformation and cyber risks. To address these issues, SolidarMed employed a participatory co-design approach with adolescents and health professionals to collaboratively develop a digital HealthHub. This platform delivers age-appropriate SRHR content on topics such as sexual health, mental health, and family planning, and enables live interactions with trained nurses to answer specific questions. It also incorporates a feedback tool to capture user insights regarding facility care, along with safeguarding measures, such as content moderation and user

registration, to help prevent misinformation and cyber bullying. Building on this collaborative development, we piloted the HealthHub to evaluate its effectiveness in real-world settings.

Methods: The pilot was conducted at Bota Rural Health Centre in Masvingo Province from the 2nd of July to the 31st of December 2024. During this period, adolescents accessed the HealthHub via a tablet available at the Teenage Health Information and Innovation Space established by SolidarMed. The pilot focused on assessing the platform's usability and engagement among adolescents providing initial insights into its potential impact and areas for further improvement.

Results: During the six-month pilot, 73 adolescents registered on the HealthHub, with 66% (48/73) providing feedback via built-in surveys. The Q&A feature recorded 103 comments, indicating active engagement and a strong demand for the content offered. Qualitative feedback consistently highlighted the platform's ease of navigation, relevance, and accessibility, even in areas with limited internet connectivity thanks to the offline accessibility options. Additionally, intermittent power outages were identified as a technical challenge, informing our plans for enhanced infrastructure and improved analytics in future iterations.

Conclusions: The pilot of the digital HealthHub at a rural health facility demonstrates that a co-designed, adolescent-centered digital platform can effectively engage a rural adolescent population in accessing age-appropriate SRHR information in resource-limited settings. Although preliminary, the findings underscore the critical need for inclusive, youth-driven digital solutions and suggest that this approach offers a replicable model for advancing SRHR safely and equitably. Future efforts will focus on expanding the platform's reach, integrating robust analytics to capture detailed usage patterns, and refining technical features to address challenges such as power instability, thereby enhancing overall system effectiveness.

The Power of Social Media: Trans Activism, Reducing Stigma & Building Community

by Léon Salin, Salin Association

Social media has become a powerful tool for advocacy, especially in trans activism. This keynote explores how digital platforms can drive behavioral change, reduce stigma, and foster open conversations around gender identity and inclusion. Drawing from his personal experience as a digital creator, Léon will discuss the challenges and opportunities of online visibility, from handling criticism and digital hate to using social platforms for education, community-building, and policy influence. Key topics include strategies for leveraging social media to create meaningful impact, how different audiences engage with trans activism online, and the future of digital advocacy in the face of evolving policies. The session will also offer practical insights for NGO professionals and public health experts looking to build an engaged online presence. An interactive Q&A will allow participants to ask questions anonymously, ensuring an open and honest dialogue. This keynote is an opportunity to reflect on the evolving role of social media in trans activism and explore how digital spaces can be harnessed for positive social change.

Sex Work in the Digital Age: Risks, Realities and the untapped Potential of Social Media for Service Providers

by Yigit Aydin, European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance

Technology and sex work have long shaped each other, from the printing press facilitating erotic publications to the online platforms that have transformed the ways sex workers engage with clients and communities. Social media, in particular, has significantly altered the landscape of sex work, both as a tool for visibility and empowerment and as a source of heightened surveillance, discrimination and exclusion. This session explores the evolving relationship between technology and sex work, contrasting expectations with lived realities. It critically examines the role of social media not only in reshaping how sex work is conducted but also in its potential as a crucial entry point for sexual health services. What prevents this potential from being realised? What barriers (algorithmic, legal, social) stand in the way of sex workers accessing the digital spaces they rely on? Most importantly, what do sex workers need from policymakers and service providers to ensure digital spaces foster, rather than hinder, their safety and well-being?

Leveraging Social Media for Transforming Youth SRHR in Mali

by Adam Dicko, AJCAD Mali/ IAMANEH

In Mali, young people are increasingly acquiring their knowledge via social media and digital tools are used to reach in particular youth with information and messages about sexual health and rights, to incite critical thinking about harmful norms and mobilise younger generations for change. The panel discussion with Adam Dicko, President of the youth organization Association des Jeunes pour la Citoyenneté Active et la Démocratie (AJCAD), explores how digital platforms influence the understanding of sexuality education and reproductive health rights (SRHR), as well as what content is appealing to young people. In particular, the cooperation with influencers, who play a central role for youth organizations in the dissemination of SRHR information will be highlighted. The talk will further delve into AJCAD's strategies for developing innovative campaigns that meet the needs of young people, as well as how to deal with challenges such as hate speech and fake news to promote a safe online environment. Adam Dicko's key message is: "Experts and organisations dealing with polarising issues must have an active presence on social media!"
