Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore

7–9 November 2024

Global Health in the Age of AI.   
Charting a Course for Ethical Implementation and Societal Benefit

***On the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore, from 7 to 9 November 2024, a symposium featuring forty world experts in ethics and global health will be held to promote the safe and equitable development of artificial intelligence.***

Can the use of artificial intelligence in healthcare fuel social inequality in terms of access to care? Why are people reluctant to trust artificial intelligence when it comes to health? How can data from social media, mobile phones, street and satellite images be used to improve public health and guide government decision making? If AI is ‘the new electricity’, what are the technical, legal and ethical obstacles to its development? When moving from theoretical models to real patient care in hospitals, what are the concrete possibilities of applying AI? And why might different development patterns in different countries cause harm instead of good?

**For the first time**, forty ethics and healthcare experts from universities and research centres from all around the world will gather from 7 to 9 November 2024 at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, to discuss the challenges and opportunities offered by artificial intelligence in the field of global health. They will be tasked with **outlining the guidelines for an increasingly conscious and ethical use of the new technological frontier**, capable of triggering virtuous processes for the right to healthcare on a global scale.

This is the objective of *Global Health in the Age of AI. Charting a Course for Ethical Implementation and Societal Benefit*, an **international symposium under the scientific direction of Luciano Floridi**, Professor and Director of the Digital Ethics Center at Yale University and Professor at the Department of Legal Studies at the University of Bologna.

**The symposium is promoted by the Fondazione Giorgio Cini**, an international meeting place for major contemporary issues. Since its establishment in 1951, the Foundation has in fact organised and hosted cycles of lectures, seminars and conferences on a wide range of topics, including at least one hundred and seventy in the scientific field and sixty-five in the medical field, welcoming the world’s leading intellectuals, scientists and academics.

“The Island of San Giorgio Maggiore, where art, science and technology have come together for seventy years, is a place for global dialogue on contemporary challenges, such as the development of artificial intelligence in the field of health,” emphasises **Gianfelice Rocca, President of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini**. “This theme profoundly touches our lives, and already has a very tangible fallout on people’s health. Hence the need to discuss the ethical aspects and identify possible solutions, applicable on a global scale.”

“*Trust, social determinants* and *global harmonisation* are the keywords that will animate the discussion among the experts who, for the first time in the world, will be meeting in a symposium with both practical and anticipatory objectives,” emphasises **Luciano Floridi**. “Because when we talk about AI in health, we are not just talking about data and technology, but about the wellbeing of billions of people. Health is one of the most important testbeds for artificial intelligence, in terms of impact and of understanding its potential, limits, risks and opportunities. The symposium will explore all these aspects with a view to the development of good regulation, which is supportive of responsible AI innovation.”

Artificial Intelligence and Health

**In the sphere of health, the issue of AI has a pressing global dimension to it.** In the health sphere, numerous studies have now shown how AI can be used to make the entire range of interventions more effective and efficient: from **predicting** the onset of **disease** to developing **new and more targeted** **drug treatments**; from drafting discharge letters to summarising medical research to providing clinical support for evaluating countless parameters on which therapeutic decisions are based. On paper, if combined, these capabilities **could usher in a new era of personalised, predictive, participatory and preventive medical care, enabling global healthcare systems to simultaneously improve outcomes, the experience of care and reduce costs per capita.**

**The current lack of a robust and transparent ethical regulatory framework** in the medical field risks discouraging AI research and development in healthcare, threatening to cause a de facto ‘winter of artificial intelligence’. In addition to having an impact from an economic point of view, given the huge public and private investments in support of these innovations, the non-implementation of AI penalises all citizens, particularly when they find themselves in need of treatment.

On the other hand, also complicating the outlook is the picture of structural disparities at the global level between emerging countries, which could benefit from AI solutions but lack access to the technologies to implement them, and ‘AI exporter’ countries.

The Three Obstacles: technical, legal and ethical

The causes of AI **implementation gaps** in global health are numerous and complex, but may be identified in three broad categories of obstacles: technical, legal and ethical.

The **technical** ones include issues related to access, quality and availability of pre-existing or missing data and IT infrastructure. On the **legal** front, the challenge of using AI for global health is to address the risk of discrimination and access to care and the need to ensure high security standards. Finally, on the **ethical** front, the issue of access to care must be considered.

It is essential for these challenges to be well understood by the international community. This is the only way to arrive at **a sufficiently robust ethical framework** to support regulatory development that might democratically accelerate the implementation of these technologies. But it will call for **a major effort in terms of cultural and scientific diplomacy.**

The Symposium: working towards a consensus paper

The **three days of work**, from 7 to 9 November 2024, will address these challenges through the words of **twenty speakers**, including seven keynote speakers (supported by ten rapporteurs, supporters and auditors), **from some of the world’s leading international institutions, selected on the basis of the quality of their research and their degree of impact**, such as Swiss Institute of Technology (ETH); University of Pennsylvania; Technical University of Munich (TUM); Australian Institute of Health Innovation; Yale University; Rathenau Instituut, Netherlands; University of Sao Paulo, Brazil; University of Oxford; Boston University School of Public Health; Harvard Law School; National University Hospital of Singapore and many more.

The symposium will be innovative **in the organisation of the sessions:** they will not be conducted as lectures, but in a way that inspires reflection and discussion on the spur of the moment. Hence the need for the experts to retreat for three days on the island, in **full immersion** mode, before the results of the work are made public.

The *Global Health in the Age of AI* symposium will end with **the drafting of a consensus paper** with the aim of contributing to and guiding the decisions of international governments on this issue.

The Participation of Young Researchers

In addition to the speakers, thanks to the call for papers launched by the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, **thirteen young researchers** have been selected from among a hundred or so candidates from dozens of countries, with a particular interest from the USA, Italy and Nigeria, who will be able to participate in the entire seminar thanks to a scholarship grant. They will be also invited to express their approach and reflections on the crucial challenges of our time.

**The Giorgio Cini Foundation has a long tradition of scholarships for young scholars and researchers**, thanks to the Vittore Branca Centre’s calls for applications launched annually by the seven Institutes and three Research Centres. Here, scholarship holders have the chance to engage with the rich historical and artistic heritage to be found on the island, and to develop interdisciplinary and international dialogues.

Throughout the symposium, the keynote speakers will be viewable via live streaming [on the Fondazione Giorgio Cini YouTube channel.](https://www.youtube.com/user/FondazioneGCini)

The [programm](about:blank)e of the three days may be downloaded here, including profiles and summaries of the main papers.

**Downloadable Materials:**

* Programme and speakers
* 1/ AI and Global Health: equity | Amelia Fiske
* 2/ AI and Global Health: trust | Angeliki Kerasidou
* 3/ AI and Global Health: ethics| Effy Vayena
* Gianfelice Rocca and Luciano Floridi: biographies
* The Fondazione Giorgio Cini
* FGC | A History of Science and Humanism

**Info for the press:**

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