

Humans, not AI, are always accountable for healthcare decisions, say experts at QF's WISH 2024

A panel of bioethicists and legal experts discussed the ethical implications of AI in healthcare at the global conference in Doha.

13 November 2024. Doha, Qatar — Today, a panel of bioethicists, legal and policy experts at the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) discussed the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare, focussing on accountability and the importance of including diverse data sets.

The discussion on the ethics of AI in healthcare, held at the end of the summit's first day, was based on the report 'AI and Healthcare Ethics in the Gulf Region: An Islamic Perspective on Medical Accountability'. This session featured the report's lead author Dr. Mohammed Ghaly, Professor of Islam and Bioethics at the Centre for Islamic Legislation and Ethics at Qatar Foundation's Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU).

Prof Ghaly said that accountability for the outcomes of decisions of AI-enabled medical technologies needs to lay squarely with people: "It doesn't matter how smart the machine is, it cannot be responsible for any mistakes." He added that responsibility will no longer lie with the physician alone. Instead, we need to also hold developers, programmers and data scientists to account for data bias. "We are moving into a world of collective liability," Ghaly said.

The panel highlighted several challenges to the ethical management of AI-enabled medical technologies. This issue of accountability is compounded by the complexity and opacity of AI algorithms, which can obscure the decision-making process and diffuse blame. Issues related to privacy and data protection, obtaining informed consent, addressing social disparities, considerations of medical consultation, and the aspects of empathy and sympathy pose additional challenges in the integration of AI.

The expert panel also included Dr. Barry Solaiman, Assistant Professor of Law at HBKU; Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director, EURO; UK Health Minister Andrew Gwynne, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention; and Dr Tamar Schiff, Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Division of Medical Ethics at NYU.

The data used to train AI is central to understanding "what biases are baked into it," said Dr. Schiff. In order to develop AI-enabled health systems that worked for everyone, the data needs to come from diverse data sets, the panel agreed.

While much of existing data sets currently being used to train AI in healthcare is based on data gathered in Western countries, “There are well resourced countries that can produce their own data and come to the table. We need entities from around the world to contribute,” said Dr. Ghaly.

This year, WISH was opened in the presence of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation and founder of WISH. The opening ceremony, held at Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha, included speeches from Her Excellency Dr. Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari, Qatar’s former Minister of Public Health; Lord Darzi of Denham, Executive Chair of WISH; and Christos Christou, President of Médecins Sans Frontières.

The theme of WISH 2024 is ‘Humanizing Health: Conflict, Equity and Resilience’. It aims to highlight the need for innovation in health to support everyone, leaving nobody behind and building resilience, especially among vulnerable societies and in areas of armed conflict.

Ahead of the summit, WISH entered into a strategic partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), collaborating on the development of a series of evidence-based reports and policy papers, as well as working with the United Nations’ health agency to develop a post-summit implementation strategy.

The summit features more than 200 experts in health speaking about evidence-based ideas and practices in healthcare innovation to address the world’s most urgent global health challenges.

Notes for editors

About the World Innovation Summit for Health

The [World Innovation Summit for Health \(WISH\)](#) is a global healthcare community dedicated to capturing and disseminating the best evidence-based ideas and practices. WISH is an initiative of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) and is under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, its Chairperson.

The inaugural WISH Summit took place in Doha in 2013 and convened more than 1,000 global healthcare leaders. Through international summits and a range of ongoing initiatives, WISH is creating a global community of leading innovators in healthcare policy, research, and industry.

Together, they are harnessing the power of innovation to overcome the world’s most urgent healthcare challenges and inspire other stakeholders to action.

Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) is a non-profit organization that supports Qatar on its journey to becoming a diversified and sustainable economy. QF strives to serve the people of Qatar and beyond by providing specialized programs across its innovation-focused ecosystem of education, research and development, and community development.

QF was founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, who shared the vision to provide Qatar with quality education. Today, QF's world-class education system offers lifelong learning opportunities to community members as young as six months through to doctoral level, enabling graduates to thrive in a global environment and contribute to the nation's development.

QF is also creating a multidisciplinary innovation hub in Qatar, where homegrown researchers are working to address local and global challenges. By promoting a culture of lifelong learning and fostering social engagement through programs that embody Qatari culture, QF is committed to empowering the local community and contributing to a better world for all.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, please visit: www.qf.org.qa.

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