Global Health Equity and Digital Technology

The WFPHA Global Health Equity and Digital Technology Working Group (GHEDT) addresses, from a life course perspective, disability and chronic conditions, education equity, income disparities, social justice, and digital technology.

In 2018, the Global Health Equity and Digital Technologies Working Group focused on defining its role, objectives and areas of work. The working group explored the intersection between “health equity” and “digital technology,” two seemingly unrelated topics that are very much connected to each other. As a critical priority, the working group was involved in a number of activities to expand its membership and strengthen communications. The group established its online voice and presence through the set-up of a Twitter account (@GHEDigTec_WFPHA) as well as re-focusing the Working Group’s corresponding web pages. The co-chairs also arranged the first meeting of the working group through the WebEx platform, which successfully engaged with new members interested in joining.

The co-chairs participated in several international events to continue raising the visibility of the Working Group. During the 71st World Health Assembly in Geneva, the group delivered a statement on behalf of the WFPHA addressing the WHO’s “Global strategy and action plan on public health, innovation and intellectual property.” At the American Public Health Association’s 2018 Annual Meeting and Expo in San Diego, California, the WFPHA’s President, Prof. Laetitia Rispel, and Past President, Mr. James Chauvin, spoke at a scientific session organized by the Working Group. The session discussed evaluating the impact of digital technology on population health and health equity gains with a particular focus on methods and metrics. James Chauvin highlighted results from the WFPHA’s digital technology initiative with the Aetna Foundation and discussed the challenges of implementation in member countries. Additionally, at the European Public Health Conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Dr. Stefan Buttigieg participated in the organisation of a roundtable session on the “Digital Transformation of Healthcare in Europe.” His presentation highlighted opportunities for the younger generation to contribute to the digital transformation of health in Europe.

In the upcoming year, the Working Group is looking forward to continue collaborations with the national public health associations and improve the uptake of digital technologies for public health through collaborative webinars covering topics such as social media, digital marketing and digital health.