

Utilizing Digital Solutions for Advancing Public Health Before, During, and After the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Case of Slovenia

Dalibor Stanimirovic, Ph.D*

ABSTRACT

Background: Comprehensive digitalization of the Slovenian healthcare system and the use of national eHealth solutions could overcome numerous obstacles in accessing data and information relevant to quality healthcare for patients and healthcare professionals. For managers, it could enable better monitoring of healthcare institutions' operations and evidence-based decision-making. The pre-pandemic era witnessed Slovenia's proactive development of digital solutions, laying the foundation for a resilient eHealth system. During the peak of the Covid-19 crisis, the country adeptly employed technology to manage and mitigate the impact on public health. Post-pandemic, Slovenia continues to leverage digital advancements for ongoing healthcare improvements.

Methods: This article analyses the use of selected eHealth solutions before, during, and after the Covid-19 pandemic in Slovenia, which has sparked significant interest in the processes of digitalization and the use of eHealth solutions. The research applies a case study methodology based on a literature review, later supplemented by interviews with eHealth solution managers, and insights into actual statistical data from eHealth solutions' administrative and business intelligence modules.

Results: The results suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic may represent a turning point in the perception of digitalization. Thanks to its versatile utility, digitalization has emerged as a critical instrument for managing public health, fostering resilience, promoting healthcare system development, and empowering patients during national and international public health crises.

Conclusion: Recent developments have made it clear that modern digital solutions have a significant impact on public health management, providing essential support for decision-making, planning, and management processes in the healthcare system. This study offers insights into the successful implementation of national digital solutions, illuminating Slovenia's innovative practices and lessons learned.

Keywords: digitalization, public health, Covid-19 pandemic, eHealth, Slovenia.

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* University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Public Administration
Gosarjeva 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.
E-mail: dalibor.stanimirovic@fu.uni-lj.si