**EDITORIAL**

# DIGITAL HEALTH (eHEALTH): A PARADIGM SHIFT SHAPING THE FUTURE HEALTH CARE IN 21ST CENTURY

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In the 21st century, digital health can connect health systems and provide health services that promote health for people of all ages. The field of knowledge and practice is essentially related to the development and use of digital technologies to improve health. About 20 years ago, World Health Assembly urged member states "to consider drawing up a long-term strategic plan for developing and implementing eHealth services". In 2013, the Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA66.24 on eHealth standardization and interoperability, which urged member States "to consider developing policies and legislative mechanisms linked to an overall national eHealth strategy". WHO mentioned in the document that "Digital health will be valued and adopted if it: is accessible and supports equitable and universal access to quality health services; enhances the efficiency and sustainability of health systems in delivering quality, affordable and equitable care; and strengthens and scales up health promotion, disease prevention, diagnosis, management, rehabilitation and palliative care including before, during and after an epidemic or pandemic, in a system that respects the privacy and security of patient health information." As WHO explained the global strategy aims to strengthen health systems by applying digital health technologies to consumers, health professionals, health care providers and industry empowering the patients and achieving a vision of health for all.

WHO set the four guiding principles for digital health:

1. Acknowledge that institutionalization of digital health in the national health system requires a decision and commitment by countries

2. Recognize that successful digital health initiatives require an integrated strategy

3. Promote the appropriate use of digital technologies for health

4. Recognize the urgent need to address the major impediments faced by least-developed countries implementing digital health technologies

Ministry of Health and Population created a e-portal about Digital Health mentioning two national programs,

1. Digital Nepal Framework (Health Sector)

2. eHealth Implementation Roadmap

but details are not available. A conference "Spectrum of Digital Healthcare in Developing Countries; Now, Next and Beyond" was organized by B P Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, Dharan in 2022. Now a days another term eHealth is also used that means "healthcare practice supported by electronic processes and communication". The eHealth is an emerging field at the intersection of medical informatics, public health, and business and refers to health services and information provided or developed through the internet and related technologies. In a broader sense, the term describes not only technical development, but also a state of mind, mindset, attitude and commitment to network-based, global thinking to improve health care at local, regional and global levels. with the help of information and communication technology.

Effective national ownership, strong institutional capacity, human capacity and good governance are crucial in the planning and implementation of ehealth. The overall architecture, standardization and interoperability of nationwide planning will be successful in the implementation of eHealth. Information and communication technology platforms can be used to increase accountability, transparency and empower citizens to actively participated in health management and most importantly health service delivery.

## REFERENCE

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