Editorial

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Connected Health: first issue @ a glance

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INTRODUCTION

Following a preparatory phase during which the general journal guidelines and structure were defined and the Editorial Board settled, the journal's first issue is finally online with four high-quality papers.

In the opening editorial, the rationale for establishing *Connected Health* is presented[1]. The journal fits a modern web platform concept fully dedicated to publishing innovative research and state-of-the-art reviews or opinion papers focused on digital health solutions and applications. Notably, the journal is not just a scientific magazine; it is a virtual community where computer scientists, bioengineers, physicians, and other healthcare professionals can share and discuss their research pragmatically. Each published paper is accompanied by an interview hosting the primary author, who summarizes the experience of her/his research and offers her/his vision on the specific topic. The News Section is constantly updated with video interviews of leading experts in the field and relevant tidings from the web and scientific journals. A social platform for exchanging ideas and opinions has also been successfully established on Twitter (@ConnectedHealt5): in its first months, the journal tweeted 100 times and collected 53 followers. The journal's Editorial Board consists of 30 experts (22 males and 8 females) representing the five continents. The members have been selected among scientists with a high standard of research in digital health: their overall number of indexed publications sums up to 6247 (an average per member of 208), and their H-index is well above the average (n average per member of 32, with a total sum of 956).

TOPICS OF THE FIRST ISSUE

The main paper of the first issue is a timely exposure of the contribution of telemedicine worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic for the prompt identification of people affected with the new coronavirus disease and, most importantly, for guaranteeing the continuity of care of frail patients with multiple chronic diseases[2]. Thanks to the contribution of 21 experts, the level and features of telemedicine uptake on the five continents during the pandemic are overviewed and presented. The emerging picture is encouraging, although the adoption of telemedicine appears to be fragmented and heterogeneous across different countries. Although some pre-existing barriers hindering the implementation of telemedicine were at least partially removed during the pandemic (e.g., enactment of new regulations and guidelines, reimbursement processes, and increased integration with traditional healthcare services), essential gaps still need to be filled to favor the large-scale implementation of telemedicine (e.g., need of universal policy, standards, and more practical guidelines; the definition of specific reimbursement programs in most countries; improvement in technology and infrastructures; and increase in patient and physician awareness). The paper is accompanied by an interview with the lead author of the paper, summarizing the main messages and recommendations (https://chjournal.net/announcement/view/344).

The other two papers focus on digital health applications for hypertension management. Ambulatory blood pressure monitoring (ABPM) is the best method to assess the BP level of an individual and make an accurate diagnosis of hypertension. However, this method is largely underutilized due to the relatively high cost of devices and managing software, the need for a personal computer with a wired connection to the ABPM device, and cumbersome-to-use legacy software. Additionally, the diagnostic technique requires adequate training and expertise among physicians on how to perform and interpret the test, a factor that is limiting ABPM uptake. In their paper, *Padwal and coworkers* illustrated the features and workflow of a cloud-based ABPM platform that may help disseminate the use of ABPM and improve the quality of the test by providing an easy-to-use tool guiding the technician, patient, physician, and administrative assistant through the process of ABPM performance with relatively little knowledge and effort needed[3]. The main messages of the paper are summarized in a video interview of the author available on the journal website (https://chjournal.net/announcement/view/339).

The relevance of digital health's use to make the management of hypertensive patients more efficient is confirmed in the state-of-the-art rapid review by *Kario*[4] *and coworkers*. The authors introduced the term " *digital hypertension"* as the evolution and translation of the concept of digital health into digital medicine and therapeutics. According to this modern view, digital tools such as wearables, cuff-less BP monitoring devices, and platforms favoring data and information exchange between patients and healthcare managers (including education on lifestyle modification and medication management), eventually supported by artificial intelligence, may help achieve significant BP-lowering and potentially prevent cardiovascular consequences of hypertension. A video interview with the lead author is available on the journal website (https://chjournal.net/announcement/view/346).

INITIAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE JOURNAL

Following the online publication of the journal's first issue, its acceptance among readers and web navigators has been encouraging. The paper summarizing the world impact of telemedicine during COVID-19 has been the most viewed paper of the first issue. The paper was recently indexed in PubMed (https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35233563/). Overall, the four papers of the first issue have been viewed 5386 times and downloaded 1564 times, a terrific achievement given the young age of the journal and its relatively low visibility.

A CALL FOR FUTURE PUBLICATIONS

The first issue of *Connected Health* presents high-quality publications from highly reputed scientists. However, to continue to grow and become a reference journal in the field of digital health, the journal needs to maintain its high standards. For this reason, we encourage experts in the field and enthusiastic young scientists to submit their original research papers or reviews and apply to join the journal's Editorial Board.

DECLARATIONS

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Authors' contributions

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Ethical approval and consent to participate

Not applicable.

Consent for publication

Not applicable.

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