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About our podcast series, Health Management Voices

Health Management Voices is the very first podcast series by the European Health Management Association (EHMA). It was crafted to empower community leaders and health managers through the exploration of vital topics such as increasing health literacy, mental health care models, tackling antimicrobial resistance, and leveraging digital innovations in health. Each episode features insights from experts, offering practical tools to engage citizens in advocating for their rights, improving health equity, and accessing quality care. The series included discussions on:

- ▶ Transforming community health: the power of digital innovation and data-driven management
- ▶ Community-based prevention models: success stories
- ▶ Health promotion in diverse communities: strategies and successes
- ▶ Increasing health literacy
- ▶ Bridging health inequalities: boosting health literacy in marginalised communities through community-centric approaches
- ▶ Mental health in communities: new care models and challenges
- ▶ Access to healthcare in marginalised communities
- ▶ Crisis management and health preparedness: community-level responses
- ▶ Building sustainable community healthcare supply chains
- ▶ The role of communities in tackling the AMR challenge



About the European Health Management Association

The European Health Management Association (EHMA) strives for excellent health management for a healthy Europe by supporting the spread of knowledge on effective health management practices. Active since 1982, EHMA exists so that Europe's citizens and communities can benefit from quality, safe, value-based care and health systems. Our focus is on enhancing the capacity and capabilities of health management to deliver high-quality healthcare and support the successful implementation of health policy. Our commitment is on supporting the provision of data and research findings for evidence based decision-making and monitoring health policies and practices. EHMA is the only membership organisation in Europe to bring together the full health management ecosystem, including health and hospital managers, healthcare professionals, researchers, academia, policy and decision-makers. We are a recognised and respected amplifier of best practices in the evolution of health management, and we provide an environment where evidence, challenge and experience are valued and complex debates on current topics can take place.



Transforming 
community health:
the power of
digital innovation
and data-driven
management



This podcast featured a conversation with Prof Dr Miklós Szócska, Dean of the Faculty of Health and Public Administration and Director of the Health Services Management Training Center at Semmelweis University.

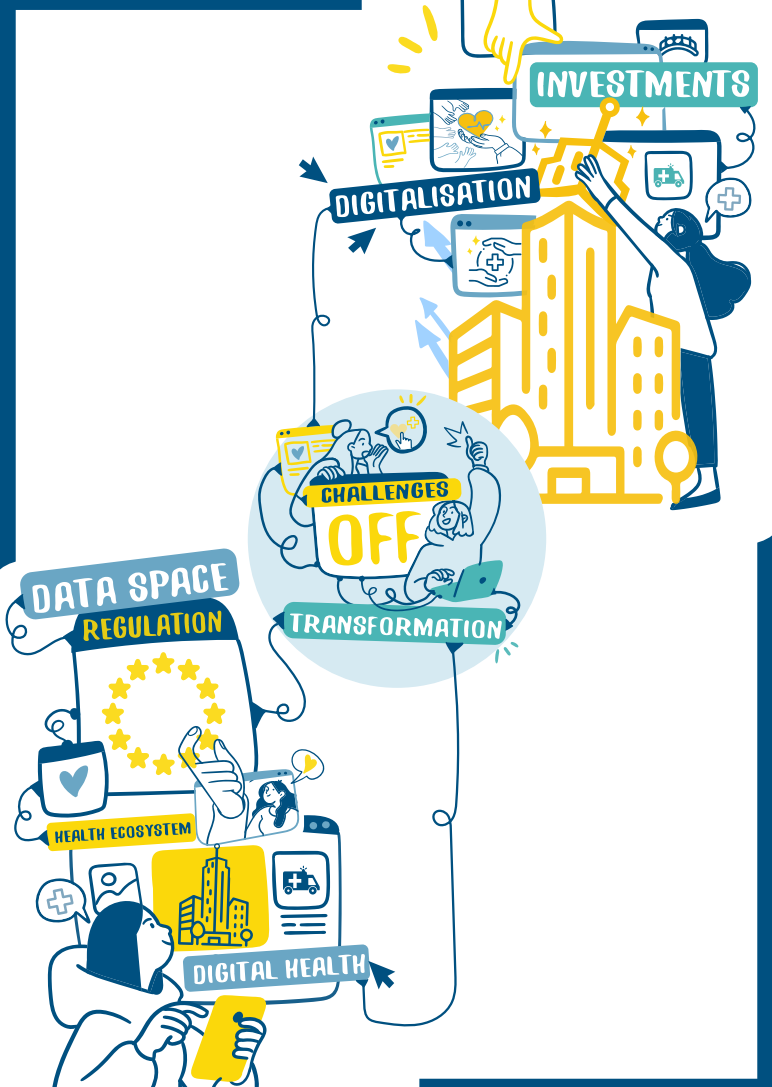
Digital health technologies, particularly those leveraging artificial intelligence, have progressed significantly, improving diagnostics and predictive analytics. However, achieving integrated, system-wide solutions remains complex, and human expertise continues to play a critical role. While automation has advanced, fully automating care pathways is still a work in progress.

Barriers to digital transformation include restricted data access, regulatory hurdles, and gaps in data science expertise. Regulations like GDPR in Europe often complicate data sharing, slowing innovation. Additionally, the shortage of skilled professionals who can bridge healthcare and data science expertise poses a significant challenge. Collaborative efforts among data scientists, healthcare providers, and policymakers are crucial to overcoming these obstacles.

A unified e-health platform in Hungary exemplifies the benefits of integrating health data into a centralised system. Citizens can access prescriptions and medical documents, streamlining healthcare management and enhancing outcomes. Such systems highlight the potential of data-driven healthcare to improve diagnostics and predictive strategies while fostering greater efficiency.

Community engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration are vital for the success of digital health initiatives. Effective projects, from pandemic modelling to cancer diagnostics, rely on partnerships across sectors like healthcare, data science, and telecommunications. These collaborations stress the importance of creating shared value and respecting contributions from all participants.

Looking forward, advanced data analytics and business intelligence systems are expected to revolutionise community health by providing real-time insights. These technologies can drive rapid interventions to tackle health disparities and accessibility issues. Capacity building for clinicians and data scientists will help bridge knowledge gaps and foster continued innovation.



**DATA SPACE
REGULATION**

HEALTH ECOSYSTEM

DIGITAL HEALTH

**CHALLENGES
OFF
TRANSFORMATION**

DIGITALISATION

INVESTMENTS



Community-based prevention models: success stories



This podcast featured a conversation with Mr Yasho Minko, Deputy Mayor of the city of Dimitrovgrad in Bulgaria, who presented SmartMed, a community-based disease prevention project designed to address the healthcare needs of underserved and remote communities in Dimitrovgrad and cross-border regions with Greece.

SmartMed tackles the disparity in healthcare access between urban and rural areas. Telemedicine plays a central role by providing remote consultations and enabling real-time data sharing between patients and healthcare providers. This model is cost-effective, reduces the need for hospital visits, and brings healthcare services closer to communities.

Health education is a cornerstone of the initiative, involving patients, healthcare professionals, and community members in ongoing training and awareness programmes. These efforts focus on preventing socially significant diseases and building capacity for a sustainable healthcare network. Training sessions and seminars have equipped stakeholders with the skills and knowledge needed to adopt and maintain the community-based model.

Sustainability is achieved through a carefully designed network that reduces dependency on hospital-based services while expanding the capacity of primary healthcare. The project has also established a shared e-health database that stores patient data securely, accessible to healthcare professionals across participating regions. This facilitates better diagnosis, treatment, and continuity of care, even for long-term and terminally ill patients.

The SmartMed approach includes mobile medical stations equipped with advanced diagnostic tools to provide on-site healthcare in remote areas. These stations have significantly increased access to medical examinations and treatments for residents in distant settlements, demonstrating the feasibility and effectiveness of mobile healthcare solutions.

The success of SmartMed highlights the importance of integrating innovative technologies like telemedicine with a focus on community involvement. It also underscores the need for partnerships among healthcare providers, local authorities, and international programmes to create adaptable and sustainable healthcare models. This initiative serves as a valuable example for addressing health disparities and improving outcomes in underserved regions.

BRINGING HEALTHCARE TO YOU





Health promotion 
in diverse
communities:
strategies and
successes



This podcast featured a conversation with Marius Geanta, MD, who is President and Co-Founder of the Centre for Innovation in Medicine in Romania.

The discussion explored strategies and challenges in promoting health within diverse and underserved communities, with a focus on rural areas. These regions often experience significant health disparities and benefit greatly from targeted, well-designed interventions. Successful health promotion requires understanding local attitudes and perceptions, as trust in healthcare systems and professionals varies widely and directly impacts outcomes.

Efforts in personalised cancer prevention demonstrate the value of integrating community engagement and social sciences. Using 'living labs', these initiatives delve into community dynamics, such as attitudes, preferences, and stakeholder networks. This research informs strategies that reduce stigma and fatalism, reframing health prevention as a positive pathway to better living. Such reframing has proven effective in fostering participation and collaboration.

Many health campaigns fail due to their lack of inclusivity and failure to address barriers, particularly in rural areas where access to healthcare services is limited. Successful models focus on addressing specific community needs, such as nutrition and physical activity, through locally relevant interventions. Building on existing resources, such as community facilities, enhances their reach and sustainability.

Sustaining community engagement is essential. Collaborating with local stakeholders, such as schools, local authorities, and community organisations, helps anchor initiatives within communities. Health management is crucial in coordinating efforts, relying on frameworks that include public institutions, academia, civil society, and businesses. A distributed leadership approach ensures all contributions are recognised, fostering trust and making initiatives more effective and sustainable.

FREE



**SCREENING
SAVED MY LIFE**



**HEALTHY HABITS
START HERE!**



**HEALTHY
LIFESTYLE?**



**HAPPY
COMMUNITY!**



Increasing health literacy



This podcast featured a conversation with Dr Rosa Vidal Alvarez, Director of Economic Analysis and Payment Systems at La Unió Catalana d'Hospitals, which is a membership association of health and social care services providers, including mostly public, but also private healthcare providers.

Health literacy is crucial for empowering individuals to make informed health decisions. It involves obtaining, understanding, and using health information effectively, supported by skills like reading, listening, and decision-making. This competency is vital for navigating healthcare systems and managing personal wellbeing.

The responsibility for improving health literacy is shared among healthcare providers, educators, governments, public health organisations, and communities. Individuals are also encouraged to actively engage in learning about their health. However, financial constraints, limited resources, and the need to balance technological and non-technological solutions create challenges, particularly in diverse regions like Catalonia.

Catalonia's cultural and linguistic diversity presents unique barriers. Multilingual materials, professional interpretation, and digital translation tools are used to address the needs of communities speaking languages beyond Catalan and Spanish. Technology and telemedicine play a transformative role, offering tools like electronic health records, e-consultations, and educational videos to make health information more accessible.

Community engagement is vital for tailoring health literacy initiatives to specific populations. Localised efforts involve community participation, ensuring strategies resonate with diverse audiences. Emphasising prevention, education, and healthy lifestyles not only improves outcomes but also reduces healthcare costs.

Families and individuals are integral to fostering health literacy, with their involvement enhancing understanding and encouraging better health decisions. This collective effort ultimately builds healthier communities while addressing regional and cultural nuances.





**Bridging health 
inequalities:
boosting health literacy
in marginalised
communities through
community-centric
approaches**



This podcast featured a conversation with Valerie Albrecht, registered midwife at Ottawa South Midwives.

Addressing health inequalities requires focusing on improving health literacy and fostering trust within marginalised communities. Community-centric healthcare models emphasise cultural sensitivity, accessibility, and respectful communication to effectively meet the diverse needs of these populations.

Creating welcoming healthcare environments is essential to building trust. Eliminating barriers, such as intimidating spaces or complex processes, allows patients to feel comfortable and valued. Inclusive practices help empower individuals and foster a sense of respect and belonging.

The diversity of healthcare providers plays a key role in improving patient trust and communication. Seeing professionals who understand or reflect their cultural backgrounds reassures patients, building confidence in their care. Even when matching clients with culturally aligned providers is not feasible, respectful collaboration within teams positively impacts patient experiences.

Health literacy challenges are addressed by understanding patients' cultural contexts and familial influences. Guiding patients with empathy and tact, while respecting their values, ensures essential health information is conveyed effectively without alienating them. For individuals new to healthcare systems, such as refugees or those with limited prior access, simplifying processes and providing practical support are crucial. Collaboration with community organisations, including social workers and culturally relevant networks, is vital for addressing broader determinants of health. These partnerships provide support systems that ease isolation and help build stronger connections between healthcare services and the communities they serve.

Healthcare professionals are encouraged to approach their practice with humility, curiosity, and adaptability. Recognising personal biases, learning from patients, and creating inclusive spaces are essential for reducing inequalities and improving health outcomes for marginalised populations. By addressing systemic and personal barriers, healthcare providers can help create a more equitable and effective system.



Mental health in 
communities: new
care models
and challenges



This podcast featured a conversation with Mr Jeremy Jennings and Dr Vanessa Goodman, respectively the President and one of the clinical psychologists of Community Help Service (CHS) - www.chsbelgium.org.

CHS operates a 24-hour Helpline that receives thousands of calls each year from individuals dealing with anxiety, depression, loneliness, and other mental health challenges. In a world where mental health issues represent one of the most pressing societal concerns, this English-speaking Helpline offers a safe and confidential space for people of all ages in Belgium and beyond who are struggling to navigate their lives. In addition to the Helpline, CHS manages a Mental Health Services Centre, staffed by a team of professional therapists who provide longer-term support to individuals of all ages.

CHS delivers integrated care, drawing on its strong connections with the Belgian health system while maintaining its independence. Its approach is uniquely tailored to address the specific needs of its clients, overcoming barriers related to language, finances, and the availability of services. The organisation stands out for its holistic and collaborative care model, effectively bridging gaps between individuals and professional mental health resources.

Looking to the future, CHS aspires to expand its outreach, enhance its visibility, and adopt advanced technologies, including AI-based tools, to improve training and service delivery. It aims to remain a cornerstone of community-based mental health care, providing high-quality, accessible support to those in need. However, the mental health sector continues to face significant challenges, including resource limitations, pervasive stigma, and the need for enhanced training in therapeutic techniques. Broader societal issues, such as isolation, rising cases of burnout and depression, and the lack of inclusive care options for diverse populations, further compound these difficulties.

CHS recognises the importance of fostering a strong sense of community and delivering compassionate, effective mental health care. The organisation remains optimistic about its ability to adapt and grow, ensuring it continues to meet the increasing demand for mental health services while maintaining its commitment to high-quality, accessible care.



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Access to 
healthcare in
marginalised
communities



This podcast featured a conversation with Prof Amelia Compagni, Director of the Center for Research in Health and Social Care Management, CeRGAS, at Università Bocconi.

The podcast highlighted the barriers marginalised communities face in accessing healthcare and offered insights into addressing these challenges. A key focus was on people experiencing homelessness, a diverse group including those living on the streets, women fleeing domestic violence, migrants, and individuals in precarious housing. This population faces severe physical and mental health issues, often worsened by substance abuse, with an average life expectancy of just 43–45 years in Europe. These poor outcomes stem from their living conditions and systemic barriers to healthcare access.

Barriers operate at multiple levels. Individually, people experiencing homelessness may prioritise basic needs like food and shelter over health, lack awareness of services, or distrust in institutions. Systemically, healthcare services often fail to adapt to their specific needs. Policy-driven barriers also persist, such as requiring an official address for primary care, a practice recently reformed in Italy through the introduction of fictitious addresses.

Efforts to reduce stigma are crucial. Language matters: describing individuals as "people experiencing homelessness" rather than "the homeless" highlights their humanity and the temporary nature of their situation. Collaboration is another key to addressing these issues. Partnerships between healthcare providers, NGOs, and policymakers are essential. For instance, the Ulisse project in Milan brought together stakeholders to identify barriers, evaluate initiatives, and include people experiencing homelessness in designing and assessing services. This inclusive approach ensures that their voices inform solutions.

An ideal healthcare system for marginalised communities would ensure accessibility, person-centred care, and universal coverage. By integrating healthcare with social services and focusing on the most vulnerable, society as a whole benefits. Although addressing growing inequalities remains challenging, European healthcare values provide a strong foundation for building more inclusive systems.



EQUITY



BARRIERS



HARDSHIPS



Crisis management and health preparedness: community-level responses



This podcast featured a conversation with Dr George Kapetanakis, President of the Hellenic Cancer Federation - ELLOK and President of the Pieria Cancer Patients Association.

Effective crisis management and health preparedness are vital for ensuring resilience during public health emergencies. Events like the COVID-19 pandemic have shown the necessity of robust systems to respond to unprecedented challenges, especially in regions with limited resources or underdeveloped infrastructure. Healthcare systems were tested by strained diagnostics, disrupted supply chains, and overburdened care facilities, exposing vulnerabilities and emphasising the need for thorough crisis planning to maintain care continuity, protect healthcare workers, and strengthen public health communication.

Collaboration across sectors was essential. Partnerships among healthcare providers, government agencies, and community organisations enabled resource sharing and coordinated responses. These efforts were crucial in managing medical supplies like personal protective equipment and vaccines while supporting vulnerable populations during lockdowns and restrictions.

Digital technology played a critical role in crisis response. Remote monitoring, data analysis, and streamlined healthcare delivery allowed efficient resource allocation and informed decision-making. However, technology must be coupled with strong foundational systems and guided by human expertise to achieve its full potential.

Equitable healthcare access remained a major issue, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas. These regions often faced delays in receiving care and resources. Decentralising healthcare services and improving infrastructure were identified as essential strategies for addressing these disparities.

Future investments in preparedness must prioritise resilience, flexibility, and inclusivity. Enhancing local healthcare capacities, improving supply chain logistics, and fostering collaborative networks will better position systems for future crises. Lessons learned from recent years offer a strong foundation for building adaptive and equitable healthcare systems.





Building
sustainable
community healthcare
supply chains



This podcast featured a conversation with Dr Peter Tinnemann, Public Health Consultant and Director of the Public Health Authority of the city of Frankfurt am Main in Germany.

Sustainable community healthcare supply chains are essential for effective public health responses. Experiences from crises like COVID-19 and mpox have highlighted the need for resilient systems capable of adapting to unexpected challenges.

Early pandemic responses exposed vulnerabilities in supply chains, including shortages of vaccines and personal protective equipment, coordination issues, and gaps in pre-established networks. Over time, lessons learnt led to improved logistics, storage, and distribution systems. For example, handling temperature-sensitive vaccines and ensuring equitable distribution became critical priorities.

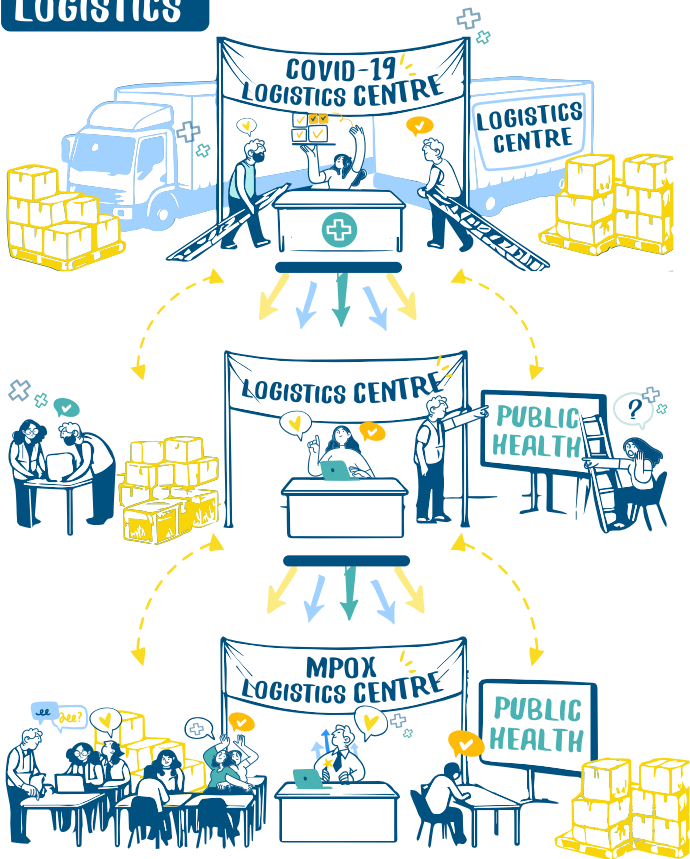
Localised production and storage of essential materials are highlighted as key strategies to reduce dependency on global supply chains. Reliance on international production caused significant delays during the pandemic, underscoring the need for regional manufacturing within frameworks like the EU to enhance preparedness and accessibility.

Communication systems proved vital during public health crises. Pre-established networks with suppliers, healthcare providers, and agencies allowed for more effective responses. Dedicated crisis management teams and regular communication ensured seamless transitions between routine operations and emergency responses.

Technology offers opportunities for improving resource management and data sharing but also presents risks if over-relied upon. Ensuring systems can function manually in case of disruptions is necessary for resilience.

Collaboration between local, national, and international agencies strengthens healthcare supply chains and fosters trust. By integrating crisis-management practices into everyday operations, public health systems can better protect communities and ensure readiness for future challenges.

LOGISTICS





The role of 
communities
in tackling the
AMR challenge



This podcast featured a conversation with Dr Andrea Caputo Svensson, Global Health Advisor at ReAct, Action on Antibiotic Resistance - www.reactgroup.org.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) poses a critical threat to global health, driven by the misuse of antibiotics and poor sanitation practices. This natural phenomenon, where microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi evolve to resist drugs, undermines the effectiveness of treatments and jeopardises medical procedures like surgeries and cancer therapies.

Human activities have accelerated AMR significantly. In healthcare, antibiotics are often overprescribed, as seen during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. In agriculture and aquaculture, their preventive use in livestock feed and fish farming perpetuates resistance. Inadequate sanitation and access to clean water further enable resistant microbes to spread, especially in resource-limited regions.

The impact of AMR is stark. Each year, it contributes to over 1.27 million deaths globally, with children under five particularly affected. Without action, AMR could reduce life expectancy by nearly two years by 2050 and cause tens of millions of deaths. Economically, the costs are already enormous, exceeding \$46 billion annually, and they are set to rise.

Community-led initiatives have become vital in addressing this issue. Awareness programmes, like those in Zambia, teach proper antibiotic use and promote hygiene practices. In India, tools for monitoring antibiotic use across sectors empower local action. Sweden's pilot projects in schools and hospitals showcase how institutions can model responsible antibiotic use.

Global efforts, such as the *From People to Leaders* campaign, amplify grassroots perspectives, advocating for inclusive policies to tackle AMR. These initiatives highlight the collective power of individuals, communities, and leaders in addressing this crisis. With education, awareness, and action, progress against AMR is achievable, safeguarding health and medicine for future generations.



MEDICATION OVERUSE

**ANTIBIOTICS
DON'T WORK
ON VIRUSES?**

**HAHA!
YOUR
ANTIBIOTICS
CAN'T STOP
ME NOW!**

BOOM!

RESISTANCE

ANTIBIOTICS

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