



AESGP Position Paper

Paving the way for the digitalisation of the self-care sector

Excerpt — Building Digital Workforce Capacity

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Building Digital Workforce Capacity

The need to build digital workforce capacity is **already well recognised** (1). AESGP believes that **it is important to train people specialised in the field** of artificial intelligence or data science to operate in a regulated healthcare environment, **as well as to give basic training to the general population** on using digital solutions. Encouraging digital literacy in healthcare will not only ensure a responsible and adequate use of the digital tools but also build trust in the system.



KEY SELF-CARE INDUSTRY ASKS REGARDING DIGITAL WORKFORCE CAPACITY

1. Invest in training and development of specialised workforce

As recognised by the European Commission, there is a shortage of highly skilled and qualified professionals in the digital area (Information and communications technology (ICT) professionals, data scientists, etc). The deficiency crosses society, regulatory, industry and healthcare professionals.

At the regulator level, the current **lack of national health system digitalisation** and the **lack of digital capabilities within health authorities** demonstrates that there is an urgent need for greater competences in this area, resolvable by recruiting and training more people with expertise in data science and ICT. Additionally, as regulators and industry are driving several **ambitious initiatives in this area**, it is expected that the need for **skilled workforce in the ICT and data areas will increase**.

Besides, healthcare professionals (doctors, pharmacists, nurses...) will need to adapt and integrate digital technology education and training as a foundation requirement, as well as develop skills using distinct new technologies (e.g. AI for diagnosis, various diagnostic, monitoring, and treatment apps). In fact, the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) has already released a Policy on Digital Competencies for Doctors (2) which details the necessary digital competencies for current and future doctors.

2. Critical need to increase the basic knowledge of the general population

The lack of digital skills in the general population is also of concern. According to numbers shared by the European Commission, the percentage of the population having basic digital skills in 2018 was around 57% (3). In 2025 it is expected that this number will increase to 65%.

There is a clear need to improve digital skills so that everyone can take advantage of digital transformation and specific efforts should be made to help the elderly learn to use digital tools. Considerations should also be given on how access to digital solutions could be improved. Finally, specific training on GDPR and GDPR data management would also be really helpful.

(1) *Building digital workforce capacity and skills for data-intensive science*. Available at <http://www.oecd.org/publications/building-digital-workforce-capacity-and-skills-for-data-intensive-science-e08aa3bb-en.htm>. Consulted October 30th 2020.

(2) Available at https://www.cpme.eu/index.php?downloadunprotected=/uploads/adopted/2020/11/CPME_AD_Board_21112020_100.FINAL_CPME_Policy_Digital_Competencies_for_Doctors.pdf. Consulted December 9th 2020.

(3) *The European data strategy fact sheet* available at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_20_283. Consulted October 22th 2020.





SPECIFIC ENABLERS

1. Awareness campaigns

The lack of information or knowledge **is often paired with fear and distrust**. To bring the population onboard the digital journey envisioned, **awareness campaigns are required**. Some basic explanations **as to how these new technologies work and are used in healthcare should be provided**. Information on efforts and measures that protect personal data should be an integrated part of communication campaigns.

1. Open-source resources (webinars, podcasts, online courses)

Awareness campaigns should be supported by **good quality** user-friendly resources on the digital topics. These resources should be open-source and available **on government-run platforms**. Healthcare providers should be encouraged to refer patients to these resources to foster patients' self-education of their conditions and reinforce methods for both disease prevention and health management.

1. Continuous professional development

As healthcare professionals are going to be “first in line” to use the various new technologies and **asked to provide advice**, extensive trainings should be provided to them and be part of their mandatory professional development as well as foundation training.





About

The **Association of the European Self-Care Industry (AESGP)** is a non-profit organisation which represents the manufacturers of non-prescription medicines, food supplements and self-care medical devices in Europe, an area also referred to as consumer healthcare products.

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