



HELINA 2023 CONFERENCE



Effective Implementation, Meaningful Use and Sustainability of Digital Health Interventions: The Role of Health Informatics and Imaging Informatics in Africa

Hosted by the South African Health Informatics Association (SAHIA)

October 2023

Cape Town, South Africa

Globally, countries are working progressively to improve the health of their populations by working towards the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Digital Health Interventions have been touted as an enabler to achieving the SDG goal 3 which is to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all. In a number of ways, the increasing use of digital health has made healthcare more efficient, effective and affordable. Digital health has revolutionized the healthcare landscape globally with an estimated 50% of mobile phone users worldwide using health related apps in 2018. Digital health interventions such as telemedicine, electronic medical records and wireless health devices have consistently been shown to have immense benefits for remote patients and the general population.

Sub-Saharan Africa has become an emerging powerhouse of digital health interventions and innovations with rapid expansion and evolution over the last few years. While success stories abound in digital health implementations in the region, there is an abundance of pilots and solutions that may not be sustained after donor support diminishes. There is the need to focus on sustainability to ensure gains made in improved health outcomes due to the interventions are not lost. There should be an opportunity for projects and countries to share success stories and learnings of effective implementations that have proven to be sustainable. In Africa, there is a dearth of knowledge on scalable digital health solutions and how the growth to scale was achieved and sustained.

Imaging informatics is another pillar of digital health which have matured significantly over the last few years. With the improvement in network infrastructure and Internet speeds these solutions have changed how medical images are interpreted and shared. The advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this area are also significant. HELINA 2023 will introduce a dedicated imaging informatics stream to provide opportunities to share research, learn, and collaborate on the role of imaging informatics in Africa.

HELINA 2023 seeks to provide a platform for formal research results, use cases, knowledge and practices to be shared among peers in the region. The organizers of HELINA 2023 thus welcome original presentations in the following categories:

1. **Full research papers** (Presentation of original mature research results, between 5 and 8 pages.)
2. **Work in progress research papers** (Presentation of work in progress research, between 3 and 5 pages.)

3. **Case studies, and experience papers** (Can be submitted as abstracts and should clearly describe the use case of interest. max 3 pages.)

Papers may be submitted in English or French and should not have been submitted to other conferences or journals. Submissions exceeding the maximum page length specified above will be rejected immediately without review. All papers will be subject to a double blind peer-reviewed evaluation and accepted **full research papers** will be published in a special edition of the **Journal of Health Informatics in Africa** (<http://www.jhia-online.org>). Accepted *work in progress papers, case studies, and experience papers* will be electronically published in the conference proceedings with ISBN number on the HELINA website. For a paper to be published, at least one of the authors must register for the conference and present the accepted paper.

The JHIA online paper submission system must be used. The paper submission template found on the website (<https://www.jhia-online.org/index.php/jhia/submissionguide2>), provides detailed instructions for authors aligned with the *Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals* (<https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/>). When making a submission, please take note of the following important points:

- For **full research papers**, select **HELINA 2023 – Full Research Papers** under the **SECTION** drop-down when making the submission; and
- For **work in progress papers** select **HELINA 2023 – Work in Progress** under the **SECTION** drop-down when making the submission.
- For **case studies, and experience papers**, select **HELINA 2023 – Case Studies & Experience** under the **SECTION** drop-down when making the submission.

Failure to adhere to the above instructions will result in papers not being reviewed for the HELINA conference.

In case you encounter any difficulties in using the electronic submission system, please contact the HELINA 2023 technical team at editor@jhia-online.org.

The conference organizers also welcome proposals for panel discussions and pre-conference workshops. Such proposals should be sent to the SPC Chair directly (editor@jhia-online.org). Please see below for further details:

- **Panel discussion proposals:** The panel session leader should submit a 3-5 page proposal with an overall description of the digital health topic of discussion in conformity with the theme of the conference, followed by a brief outline (up to 4 paragraphs) of each of the panellist's topic of discussion. A total of 4-5 panellists should be included in the abstract and each panellist should aim to submit a different but complementary perspective of the main topic but avoid duplicative content. All panel session proposals will be subject to a peer-review evaluation. All members of the panel must register for and attend the conference. Panel sessions will typically be 45-60 minutes.

- **Pre-conference workshop proposals:** A 3-5 page proposal describing the workshop should be submitted. The typical structure should include a Background/Introduction, Learning Objectives, Audience/Participants, Learning Style/Approach, Learning Outcomes and Materials. A pre-conference workshop should provide participants with an opportunity to extend their knowledge and strengthen their skills in key topics on digital health. It should stimulate discussion and share practical experience from innovative digital health solutions, approaches and policies in the field aimed at building capacity of the participants in an environment that allows for in-depth interaction. All Pre-conference proposals will be subject to a peer-review evaluation. Workshops will typically be half-a-day. A full-day's workshop may be considered in some cases. The proposal should also highlight how the workshop will be facilitated in a virtual environment.

Important dates:

- **Paper submission deadline:** 15 May 2023
- **Paper acceptance notification:** 24 July 2023
- **Papers ready for publication deadline:** 04 September 2023
- **Conference dates:** October 2023

For more information, please contact:

- Chair of the Conference: Frances Baaba da-Costa Vroom, president@helina.africa
- Chair of the local organizing committee: Clive Daniell, clive@in2pacs.co.za
- Chair of the Scientific Committee: Nicky Mostert, editor@jhia-online.org