

Digital transformation in healthcare – aversion to new technology persists

- 2018/2019 D21 Digital Index shows that e-health remains a niche topic: There is openness to the idea but the benefits are not recognized
- CHG-MERIDIAN supports D21 Digital Index and critically examined study results in panel discussion
- The panel discussion took place at the DMEA on April 9, 2019 at the Berlin Capital Club

Weingarten, April 16, 2019

The **findings** of the recently published **2018/2019 D21 Digital Index study** clearly show that digital healthcare applications are not yet widespread. Although those surveyed were open to the idea of digital health in principle, **e-health** continues to be a niche topic regarded as ‘technology for geeks’. The detailed figures are quite alarming: One in three respondents was open to the subject in principle, one in four could imagine the use of telemedicine, but only a tiny minority of people are actually using these technological options. The broad majority do not see a sufficient benefit (50 percent).

Karin Maag, *spokesperson on healthcare policy for the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the German Bundestag*, believes that “particularly when it comes to healthcare policy, all those involved must work hand in hand to deal with the current challenges, and especially to highlight the benefits of digital applications. There remains a great need for more information and advice here, which we should endeavor to satisfy together.”

From niche product to common application: How can the benefits of digital health reach the heart of society?

The 2018/2019 D21 Digital Index study shows that the receptiveness for e-health applications increases in line with the level of education and income, and also with the amount of personal knowledge and digital skills. What common approach could healthcare providers, politicians, consultants, and digitalization enablers take in order to increase awareness and understanding of the benefits of digital healthcare applications among the general public?

That is why CHG-MERIDIAN brought together different viewpoints on the digital revolution at the DMEA on April 9, 2019. The evening panel discussion at the Berlin Capital Club focused on the question ‘Digital transformation in healthcare – simply technology for geeks?’ The panel discussed the findings of the D21 Initiative’s 2018/2019 D21 Digital Index study. The panel examined the conflicts inherent in the views of citizens/users/patients and industry, in a discussion between **Karin Maag**, **Michael Rosenstock**, head of Sana Digital at Sana Kliniken AG, and **Meik Eusterholz**, head of the healthcare industry business segment at management consultants UNITY.

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From vision to implementation: the first steps

According to the 2018/2019 D21 Digital Index study, 12 percent of the population use step counters or apps that measure heart rate or blood pressure, or that monitor sleep. While 27 percent are receptive toward such applications, the majority (44 percent) have no desire to make use of e-health either now or in the future. Only 1 percent have already used telemedicine, and 27 percent can at least imagine telemedicine being used in the future. But once again, the majority of those surveyed (54 percent) reject telemedicine services.

This shows that telemedicine in Germany is still very much in its infancy, even though it could be used to help address several current challenges. **Karin Maag** drew on her positive experience with pilot projects in Baden-Württemberg to explain: “I very much welcome the expansion of online consultations. This can alleviate bottlenecks created by the shortage of rural doctors and reduce the burden on the ambulance service.”

Data protection concerns among more than a third of the population

In addition to a lack of benefits perceived by half of those surveyed, reasons for not using e-health also included data protection concerns (36 percent). 81 percent of respondents regarded personal data relating to their health and illnesses as extremely sensitive information requiring the highest level of security, and which they were not willing to share via automated technology.

As **Michael Rosenstock** emphasized during the panel discussion: “The subject of data protection is and remains a complex *and highly relevant* issue, but one that can be solved. We need to proceed very transparently. We have to demonstrate how we are going to keep the risks to a minimum, how careful we are about data protection when we select new digital applications in medicine and care, and how the benefit to the patient outweighs the concerns for each solution. At our Sana Kliniken hospitals, we are already putting this into practice, as we are using a number of web-based and data-protection-compliant platform solutions. The crucial points are the explicit consent of the patients as well as communication and treatment at eye level.”

Improved patient care and economic efficiency for the hospital

Using the example of a digitalization project in the area of patient logistics, **Meik Eusterholz** explained the advantages of the digital transformation for hospitals: “A digitally supported appointment process in which many aspects are automated enables hospitals to use key figures to manage this primary process, thus providing the foundation for digital patient management. The required capital investment leads to time savings that increase the hospital’s economic efficiency in the long term. At the same time, patients benefit from this automated workflow through shorter waiting times and fewer cancellations.”

All of the participants in the panel discussion agreed that, despite a lack of financial resources, hospitals nevertheless needed to implement short-term digital transformation measures. **Peter Krause**, *head of healthcare sector sales at CHG-MERIDIAN AG*, summed it up: “Even small steps help our customers to achieve their objectives. The important thing is to get staff and patients involved in the journey toward the digital hospital, for example with successful

smaller projects that can then be duplicated and expanded. These projects provide a source for continuous learning, which in turn enables an agile reaction to any challenges.”

Further information can be found at www.chg-meridian.com

The D21 Digital Index

The D21 Initiative is Germany’s largest nonprofit network for the digital society, consisting of representatives from trade and industry, politics, academia, and civil society organizations. Every year, it conducts a large-scale social study, the D21 Digital Index, to ascertain the degree of digitalization in German society. CHG-MERIDIAN, a provider of technology management and financing services, is again a partner of the D21 Digital Index study.

For the 2018/2019 D21 Digital Index, see <https://initiated21.de/publikationen/d21-digital-index-2018-2019/>

The CHG-MERIDIAN Group

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15,000 users with maximum transparency in technology management. The CHG-MERIDIAN Group has offices in 25 countries across the globe. Its headquarters are in Weingarten, Germany.

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