

Luxembourg, 14 December 2021

**Press release of the Bridge Forum Dialogue a.s.b.l.
“Digital Transformation in Medicine:
Implications for patients, professionals and researchers”**

The Bridge Forum Dialogue a.s.b.l. (**BFD**) organized on 9 December 2021 a conference, in physical and video formats, under the title: “*Digital Transformation in Medicine: Implications for patients, professionals and researchers*”. The event was held under the chairmanship of Prof. Dr. Catherine Léglu, Vice-Rector of the University of Luxembourg, Member of the Executive Committee of the BFD. The speaker was Prof. Dr. med. Jochen Klucken, Head of the Digital Medicine (dMed) Group.

A significant and distinguished audience attended the event, including representatives from the European institutions and bodies, industry, academia, governmental authorities, financing institutions and students. The conference was broadcasted in streaming, while a number of participants attended the event in person at the European Convention Centre Luxembourg.

Professor Léglu introduced the speaker and the subject matter of the conference.

Internationally renowned neurologist Professor Jochen Klucken has extensive experience with regard to healthcare research in wearable sensor technologies for patients with Parkinson’s and other chronic diseases. These technologies serve as diagnostic tools providing objective biomarkers. He previously worked as a postdoctoral fellow at the Massachusetts Institute for Neurodegenerative Diseases, Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA on neurodegenerative processes in Parkinson’s disease.

Professor Jochen Klucken explained how digital medicine will shape the future of medicine. Telemedical hospitals and virtual clinics are already a reality today in countries like the USA and Israel. The trend has been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Wearable sensors and smartphone-applications can improve the delivery and quality of medical services to the benefit of patients through the development of new evaluation methods and benchmarking concepts for patient-centered healthcare services.

Indeed, according to the speaker new healthcare technologies will allow to rely on real-life healthcare data to better address the patient’s requirements, carefully monitor the individual patient journey, comparing it with that of similar patients and provide a more informed clinical decision basis for healthcare providers, ultimately resulting in improved health treatments. Digitalization in medicine will improve data quality and communication in both “patient-practitioner” and “practitioner-practitioner” relations. The patient will be put at the center.

He foresees that in a very near future patient-centric data will not only be used to improve the healthcare aspects for patients and also the dialogue between patients and healthcare providers, but will also serve as a new real-world evidence concept for clinical research, regulatory processes and benchmarking concepts. The power of data will be introduced into healthcare – on one side to the improvement for patients, healthcare provider and society, but also with the challenges in terms of privacy, transparency, safety, ownership, and incentivization. It will require a much more profound and broader discussion between all stakeholders to also address the ethical, legal and social aspects of data-driven and real-world evidence based healthcare that also has to be addressed by change managements on educational levels.

Professor Jochen Klucken illustrated with examples concrete digital healthcare solutions addressing mobility and gait, which can be extended to other functional impairments in Parkinson's or other chronic disease patients, including cognitive impairment. He highlighted the importance of building synergies between industry and academia to provide digital solutions, test their medical effects and patients' acceptance.

In 2019, the German parliament passed the Digital Care Act to accelerate digitalization and innovation within the German health care market. The act also paves the way to broad usage and reimbursement of digital health applications meeting certain requirements, including the new concept of "positive care effects" (medical benefits, structural and procedural improvements). These steps open up the German health care market to a digital transformation that will provide 73 million insured Germans access to digital health application on prescription. France has also very recently undertaken important steps and funding commitments in this direction.

Professor Schweitzer moderated the stimulating Q&A session.

On site and online participants submitted several questions and comments on the huge potential and challenges of digital medicine to reduce disease burden, improve healthcare and generate new solutions and services.

Professor Jochen Klucken discussed ethical and societal issues of data-driven healthcare services. The aim, he pointed out, is to maximize the benefits that can be reached with an acceptable risk for an individual patient and the society.