

# Implementation of Digital Health Technologies In Asia-Pacific: Opportunities and Challenges

AUGUST 2023



Digital Health  
To Generate  
**USD 504.4  
billion**  
by 2025,  
40% from Asia



## INTRODUCTION

Digital Health is a rapidly growing industry and is expected to generate USD 504.4 billion by 2025, with 40% generated from Asia. However, navigating APAC region's complexity and unclear access pathways for introducing innovative digital technologies can be challenging.

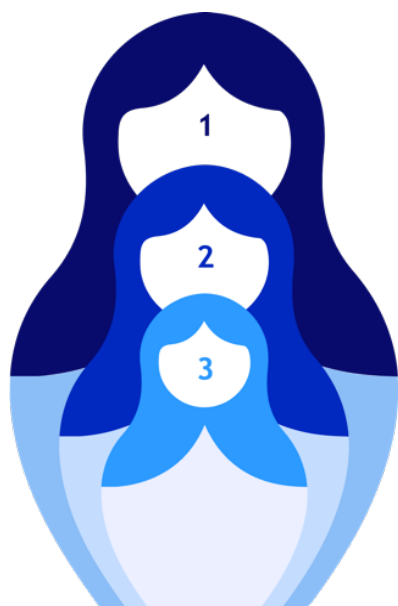
As a part of its series of Emerging Market Dialogues with Anh Bourcet<sup>1</sup>, ANSEA explored these challenges that are roadblocks to digital health technologies in APAC and provide key recommendations to manufacturers for a successful implementation of digital health technologies in this region.

<sup>1</sup>Anh Bourcet (Nguyen) is a global healthcare leader bringing 15 years of experience in Asia-Pacific and Europe, in the private and public sectors (Abbott, Johnson & Johnson, French Safety Agency). Her various roles in Medical Affairs, Health Economics & Market Access and Regulatory Policy, across diagnostics, medical devices and pharmaceutical industries, enable her to have a broad perspective on different levers of market access. She was the Founding Chair, APACMed Digital Health Committee Reimbursement Workgroup

# Defining Digital Health Technologies

## from Market Access Perspective

Digital health encompasses wide-ranging technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotic surgery, wearables, and biosensors. These have diverse technological features, functions, and categories for their application as mentioned below:



### Digital Health

Technology or platform that engages the user in health-related purposes (e.g., Fitbit, Apple Watch)



### Digital Medicine

Software, hardware or product that manages or intervenes in healthcare (e.g., remote monitoring devices)



### Digital Therapeutics

Software or device that delivers intervention to prevent or treat a disease (e.g., Somzz app for insomnia)

# Real-World Examples of Digital Health Technology



# Real-World Examples of Digital Health Technology

01



**SOFTWARE MANAGING  
ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS**

02



**TELEMEDICINE**

03



**“Somzz” app  
FOR INSOMNIA - A PRESCRIPTION  
MEDICAL DEVICE APPROVED  
IN KOREA FOR THE TREATMENT  
OF INSOMNIA**

04



**Heatflow:  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE  
POWERED IMAGING ALGORITHMS  
THAT CAN HELP DETECT  
CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE**

05



**NeuroTrack®  
AI-BASED TECHNOLOGY  
THAT ASSESS COGNITIVE  
IMPAIRMENT THROUGH  
EYE MOVEMENT**

06



**INTERNET HOSPITALS  
AN ONLINE HOSPITAL  
ECOSYSTEM IN CHINA OFFERING  
A WIDE-RANGE OF FACILITIES  
RANGING FROM CONSULTATION TO  
DIAGNOSIS AND PRESCRIPTION**

# Digital Health Technology in Asia-Pacific

## Key Challenges

APAC is a very diverse region with a wide range of healthcare systems at different stages of medical needs in terms of infrastructure and sophistication. However, there are several challenges in adopting and accelerating the use of digital health technology in this region. These include:

- 01 ABSENCE OF ONE SINGLE AGENCY FOR APPROVAL**
  - Country-wise approval process is required in APAC (unlike the EMA in Europe)
  - State-wise approval process in countries like India
- 02 DIFFERENT BUDGETS FOR HEALTHCARE EXPENDITURE THAT VARIES BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES**
  - Differences in healthcare budget allocations in developing vs developed countries
  - Some countries e.g., Singapore are self-paid raising the question of affordability
- 03 LACK OF A CLEAR REVIEW PROCESS AND ROADMAP**
  - Criteria for review and approval are not very clearly defined,
  - Lack of adequate resources to review HTA submissions
  - The evaluation frameworks are not fit-for-purpose for Digital Health Technologies, thus under-recognising the full value of these technologies
- 04 LACK OF A DEDICATED TRACK FOR DIGITAL HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES**
  - Countries follow traditional pathways to receive/grant approval
  - Difficulty in explaining to the payers about benefits and safety of digital health technology
- 05 LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE & DIGITAL LITERACY REQUIRED FOR ADOPTION OF DIGITAL HEALTH**
  - Lack of basic infrastructure like electronic medical records in developing countries
  - Connectivity a challenge in countries like the Philippines (made of 7000+ islands)
  - Still low familiarity by healthcare workforce and users, especially in daily routine
- 06 DATA PRIVACY LAWS CREATING ROADBLOCKS**
  - Countries follow traditional pathways to receive/grant approval
  - Difficulty in explaining to the payers about benefits and safety of digital health technology
- 07 INTEROPERABILITY AS A KEY CHALLENGE IN SCALING-UP**
  - Integrating DH solution within different settings with different systems

Five Pillars To Accelerate

# Uptake of Digital Health in Asia-Pacific

01

## VALUE PROPOSITION

- Understanding the level of automation and privacy configurations in the setting
- Effective communication of the technical aspects to payers and providers

02

## SEAMLESS INTEGRATION INTO THE CLINICAL WORKFLOW

- Smoothing technical logistics and administrative hurdles
- Minimize workflow disruption and additional work for the HCPs

03

## INCREASING AWARENESS

- Educating the doctors, nurses, and technical staff to help integrate the digital technology into the clinical workflow
- Providing incentives to the medical staff and patients to encourage the use of the solution

04

## PARTNERSHIP WITH DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

- Developing innovative financial models
- Partnerships with private insurance companies to address affordability
- For e.g., 'DaVinci robot' in Japan initially had partnerships with local stakeholders to increase its adoption before securing reimbursement

05

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT MARKET

- The 'biggest' market might not necessarily be the 'right' market to enter first
- For e.g., Hong Kong is a very small market but with minimal entry barriers
- Choice of market where it's easier to demonstrate the proof of concept, generate the evidence that is required to later jump start in the other markets



# Key Takeaways

No country in the APAC region has the right solution or has a clear road map

01

Reimbursement does not guarantee commercial success

02

Willingness from policymakers and other stakeholders to engage in dialogues and discussions around the uptake of digital health

03

From a provider's perspective, there is more work around creating awareness to fully realize the value of digital health technologies

04

Manufacturers need to be creative in defining a more fit-for-purpose strategy that meets local needs in order to be impactful

05



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