

What is meant by ‘*Digital Health Literacy*’? What are we referring to when we talk about digital technologies applied to health? The project DIGIHALL, whose partners are from Germany (Wohlfahrtswerk für Baden-Württemberg, Hochschule Esslingen), Italy (COOSS MARCHE) and Greece (Frontida Zois, Hellenic Open University), works in this field and aims to promote the digital health literacy of the over-65s through the training of informal caregivers (both volunteers and/or relatives) and people who work in the healthcare field and who have less than three years of experience.

For this purpose, the project team has already concluded a first research phase – PR1 (research of scientific articles, interviews, case studies) and it is launching the second phase – PR2, which includes the development of innovative didactic materials for caregivers.

In fact, the expected results of the project are an e-learning platform and a mobile app.

But, what is ‘*eHealth literacy*’? “eHealth literacy includes a dynamic and context-specific set of individual and social factors as well as technology constraints (such as the fit of a system to the user) in the use of digital technologies to search, acquire, comprehend, appraise, communicate, apply and create health information in all contexts of health care with the goal of maintaining or improving the quality of life throughout the lifespan”.¹

In 2021, only 54% of Europeans aged 16 – 74 had basic digital skills² and the objective for the next decade is to reach at least 80%.

The research carried out by DigiHall also focused on the comparison of data from the three countries involved. For example, it appeared how different are the percentages of people (aged 16-74) who searched for health information online in 2020 (Germany 70%, Greece 52%, Italy 46%) and those of the adults who received medical services thanks to telemedicine in feb/mar 2021 (Greece 38%, Italy 30%, Germany 23%).³

¹ Griebel et al. Quoted after, Samerski & Müller 2019, p. 43

² <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20220330-1>

³ OECD. (2021), Digital Health in *Health at a Glance 2021: OECD Indicators* (p.136), OECD Publishing., <https://doi.org/10.1787/08cfd7a7-en>

Considering these data and the needs which emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic, EU Member States decided to develop important policies: more than 26% of the spending of the *Recovery and Resilience Facility* (RRF) was allocated for the digital transition⁴ and the EU4Health programme 2021-2027 and Horizon Europe programme were adopted.

On a national level, the *Bundesprogramm Ländliche Entwick*, BULE (Germany), the *Digital Transformation Strategy 2020-2025* (Greece) and the *Missione 6 del Piano Nazionale Ripresa e Resilienza –PNRR* (Italy) are to be mentioned.

When we talk about '*digital health technologies*' we refer, for example, to the Electronic Health Record (EHR), telemedicine, health apps and wearable devices.

Why all these efforts towards the digitalisation in healthcare? Researchers conducted on empirical data highlighted the potential benefits and opportunities correlated with a good level of DHL and with the use of DT: a significant reduction in chronic diseases due to an improvement of self-management, a reduction in costs, travel and in the caregivers' workload and a better knowledge about one's own health. Indeed, the direct target group of the project is composed by informal caregivers, both volunteers and/or relatives and people who work in the healthcare field and who have less than three years of experience.

Caregivers' role is crucial because they act as facilitators in the learning process of the elderly and for that, the e-learning platform will provide methodological, didactic and practical tools aimed at the development of the digital health literacy skills of the elderly.

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_it