



Conference Repertoire: AI in Health Africa Conference

Introduction

The inaugural AI in Health Africa Conference, hosted by Makerere University's AI Health Lab on **November 28, 2024**, marked a significant milestone in advancing AI-driven Health solutions in Africa. Under the theme "Building a Strong Ecosystem for AI in Health Africa Systems," the event convened stakeholders from academia, Health, government, and industry to explore AI's role in diagnostics, treatment, and disease prediction. The conference emphasized collaborative innovation, ethical considerations, and the need for sustainable infrastructure to harness AI's full potential in addressing Africa's Health challenges.



KEY DISCUSSIONS & HIGHLIGHTS



Government Commitment to AI in Health

- Dr. Aminah Zawedde, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, affirmed the Ugandan government's commitment to AI adoption.
- The government has achieved 77% of its digital transformation targets but emphasized the need for policy enforcement and sustainability.
- Urged academia-industry partnerships to ensure AI solutions align with community needs.

Urgency for Locally Developed AI Solutions

- Assistant Commissioner Ministry of Health, Paul Mbaka highlighted the importance of AI solutions tailored to Africa's Health systems and landscape.
- He acknowledged AI's potential in optimizing Health resource allocation (e.g., mosquito net distribution for malaria control).
- Emphasized infrastructure and data security concerns, advocating for local AI innovations over imported solutions.

Mak-AI Health Lab & the Ocular Project

- Led by Dr. Rose Nakasi, the project leverages AI for diagnosing malaria, TB, and cancer using smartphone-integrated microscopy.
- Reduced diagnostic time from 30 minutes to under two minutes.
- Enhancing Health access through real-time data transmission to the Ministry of Health.

Ethical and Regulatory Considerations

- Data privacy, bias, and accountability were highlighted as crucial for responsible AI deployment.
- Stakeholders called for robust legal frameworks to guide AI integration.
- Cybersecurity in Health AI applications was emphasized to prevent data breaches.

Academic and Industry Collaboration

- Prof. Tonny Oyana stressed the role of academia in fostering AI-driven Health innovations.
- Emphasized the need to nurture local talent and integrate AI into research institutions.
- Advocated for leveraging AI beyond Health, including agriculture and urban planning as well as the need to look at other AI related technologies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen Policy & Regulatory Frameworks

- Develop clear national AI policies for Health to guide ethical and legal compliance.
- Establish data governance frameworks to ensure privacy and security.

Promote Capacity Building & Skill Development

- Implement AI training programs for Health professionals and researchers.
- Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration between AI experts and medical practitioners.

Advance AI-driven Disease Surveillance & Research

- Utilize AI for real-time tracking and prediction of disease outbreaks.
- Support initiatives like the Ocular Project to scale up AI-assisted diagnostics.

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Enhance AI Infrastructure & Accessibility

- Invest in reliable electricity, internet connectivity, and computing resources for AI deployment.
- Ensure affordability and accessibility of AI-driven diagnostic tools in rural areas.

Foster Public-Private Partnerships

- Engage technology firms, government bodies, and academic institutions in AI research funding.
- Encourage investment in local AI startups focused on Health solutions.

Ai in health africa network

- Formation of an AI in Health Africa Network to bring together a diverse community of stakeholders with an interest in AI in Health in Africa
- This should inform the next conference.

Ai in health africa network

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NEXT STEPS & IMPLEMENTATION

Academic & Industry Collaboration

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Dissemination & Reporting

- Share the repertoire with stakeholders, including government agencies, academic institutions, and industry partners.
- Publish insights in institutional reports, journals, and online platforms for broader reach.

Policy & Advocacy

- Use the report as an advocacy tool to influence AI policy development in healthcare.
- Engage policymakers to integrate AI-driven healthcare solutions into national strategies.

Knowledge Sharing & Awareness

- Publish summaries on websites, social media, and newsletters to engage a wider audience.
- Organize follow-up webinars and workshops to discuss key takeaways and implementation strategies.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Track progress on AI adoption in healthcare systems.
- Assess the impact of AI initiatives and refine strategies for better implementation.
- Formation of the AI in Health Africa Network.



Planning for Future Conferences

- Review the outcomes of this conference to set themes and objectives for the next edition.
- Strengthen partnerships and collaborations to ensure continuity and expansion of AI research and applications in healthcare.

CONCLUSION

The AI in Health Africa Conference reinforced the transformative power of AI in improving Health systems. By fostering collaboration, addressing ethical concerns, and investing in local innovations, Uganda and Africa can harness AI to create sustainable, efficient, and inclusive Health solutions.

Continued dialogue and action are crucial in building a strong AI-driven health ecosystem that benefits all communities.