Launching AI4BetterHearts, the First Global Data Collaborative for Improving Cardiovascular Health

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– a blog from Ann Aerts and Elena Bonfiglioli

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the world’s biggest killer, accounting for one out of three deaths globally. The enormous quantity of data in patient health records offers incredible clues for how we could defeat cardiovascular diseases – but this data is not yet usable.

To unlock this puzzle, the Novartis Foundation, Microsoft and partners are joining forces on AI4BetterHearts, the first global data collaborative for improving cardiovascular population health. The partnership is using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced analytics to combine, mine and analyze heart health data to help us better understand and address cardiovascular disease in large populations. Our ambition is to improve health outcomes by changing the way heart health is managed, predicted and prevented. Ultimately, we believe AI4BetterHearts will empower policymakers, health system managers, health workers and patients to make more accurate decisions.

The collaboration will pool heart health data from hospitals and primary care centers around the world, and further the development of AI tools that can make health policy choices more accurate. The Novartis Foundation will contribute data from its urban health initiative Better Hearts Better Cities in Africa, Latin America and Asia, and from other programs. Leveraging the Open Data Campaign and the focused AI work and expertise of the Microsoft AI for Health initiative, Microsoft is committed to enable data collaboratives and bring new tools to enhance data sharing and accelerate research collaboration across borders. These are tools such as the open source differential privacy platform developed in a collaboration with the OpenDP Initiative led by Harvard that safeguards individual privacy when extracting data insights; AI expertise and data science capabilities, as well as data sharing templates as appropriate.

Together, we hope to generate a base of evidence that can guide population health programs in the future.

There is much to gain and we believe AI4BetterHearts will benefit all stakeholders in the health and care landscape: from patients and healthcare practitioners to researchers, policymakers and ecosystem partners.

Importantly, our new data collaborative recognizes that to win the battle against cardiovascular disease, we need new types of partnership. Data sharing has become essential to realize the promise of precision medicine and precision health, but we must first define together what trusted data sharing means. There is no doubt that health data sharing can help deliver better patient and population health outcomes. Yet, we will only reach impact and scale if the AI-driven solutions deriving from them are needs-driven and human-centered.

There has never been a better time to collaborate; health and care is embracing data sharing and data collaboration at great speed. We stand ready to cooperate with many more partners to improve heart health. Join us!


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