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DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AS A DRIVER IN THE PROVISION OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

The digital revolution is affecting various sectors in the world ranging from banking, healthcare, telecommunications, retail, insurance, and Government. Technological innovations like digital health and electronic healthcare are core in the attainment of Universal Health Coverage in developing countries. However, their successful deployment is faced by several barriers and challenges in Kenya. This paper applied exploratory research methodology in reviewing existing literature in the health sector with an objective to analyze the benefits and challenges associated with the application of digital technologies for universal health coverage. The results of this study show that some of the benefits of digital technologies to universal health coverage are efficiency, controls, and quality to areas of health finance, e-referrals, electronic health records, and health information systems. This results in reduced healthcare costs, predicting epidemics, avoiding preventable deaths, improving quality of life, reducing healthcare waste, developing new drugs and treatments, improving efficiency, and quality of healthcare. While these technological developments offer countless benefits, some of the concern revolves around the distributed storage of medical data across various facilities leading to lack of data interoperability among medical agencies and the security of health information systems and patients' medical records. Lack of digital health causes delayed decision-making processes, poor medical service delivery, inaccuracy, untimeliness, and inefficiency in access to medical data. The results were used to guide the development of a conceptual framework that would be used to address the challenges for the adoption of digital technologies for Universal Health Coverage.

Key Words: Digital Technologies, Universal Health Coverage, Digital Health, Healthcare Technological Innovation, Information Communication Technology,

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