

Health AI: A better-balanced narrative

Open any article or watch any item covering health AI on the news and the chances are you'll be greeted with an overly positive narrative promoting it as a cost effective and essential tool to improve lives. What could be the downside?

But this narrative conceals a much more nuanced reality in which [major risks exist](#), including bias and discrimination. This has the potential to harm patients' health, infringe on their fundamental rights, and exacerbate health inequalities. The one-sided, often industry-driven narrative, when adopted by policy makers and politicians, can mean laws and regulations inadequately reflect risks of AI use in the health sector.

That's where civil society comes in.

Organisations like Health Action International have an important role to play in ensuring that both sides of the story are heard so that policies reflect the realities and that [AI innovations in health](#) have a benefit across society, not just for certain groups. And that they respect patient rights, for example to not be discriminated against, give informed consent to treatment, and receive high quality care.

We do this through evidence-based advocacy, speaking to decision makers at various levels of government, as well as at organisations, including the European Medicines Agency.

But another essential part of this is making sure that the media narrative around health AI is balanced so the articles we read and news we watch are informed not just from an industry perspective, but from a patient rights and safety perspective too.

And what do we do to add this civil society voice to the media discussion?

We write op-eds and we talk to journalists, whether one-on-one or through wider briefings, like one we held in Amsterdam this October, during which our experts were able to layout the evidence, explaining where the risks lie in AI use in healthcare and giving recommendations of how to counteract them.

In doing so, we contribute to a changing and better-balanced narrative so that those policymakers and politicians are given all the necessary information needed to formulate policies and regulations that promote innovation in health AI that is in the greater public interest and protects patients' rights.