

Call for Abstracts  
ICA 2025 Preconference  
in Affiliation with the Health Communication Division, Communication and Technology (CAT)  
Division, and Mobile Communication Division of the International Communication  
Association (ICA)

***“Boon or bane? The role of digital media in disease prevention and management”***

Submissions Deadline: **Friday, 31 January, 2025**

Location: Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center

Date: Thursday, 12 June, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

The role of digital media in disease prevention and management is multifaceted and complex, encompassing both empowering and threatening aspects. On the one hand, digital media provide access to valuable information and create spaces for sharing data and personal experiences, thus fostering a sense of community and support and facilitating communication between patients and healthcare providers. Physicians, in turn, can access patients' self-monitored data, remotely adjust treatment plans, provide feedback, and conduct online consultations. With these possibilities, digital health technologies can foster adherence to disease management and may present an avenue to patient empowerment. However, digital health technologies also pose potential risks for individuals and society (e.g., misinformation and encouraging unhealthy behaviors). The increasing datafication of patients' health inevitably raises concerns about privacy and misuse of data and the potential over-reliance on technology may decrease self-efficacy and autonomy. Digital health technologies may also impair development and preserve a trusting physician-patient relationship. Relatedly, critics argue that replacing real-life interactions with digital ones may exacerbate social isolation and loneliness and may widen existing health disparities, particularly among individuals with lower digital or health literacy.

Considering that the use of digital media for disease prevention and management bears both potentials and risks, we require extensive empirical research on their effects. To grasp the full picture of the role digital media play in the prevention, communication, and management of diseases, we should explore the specific rules and developments surrounding digital media by applying different levels of analysis (i.e., individual, interpersonal, organizational, and societal levels) and consider long-term use and effects of digital media in interpersonal, organizational, and societal contexts. This demands the inclusion of expertise in various subfields in communication research and—on a methodological level—the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches (e.g., in situ and panel research, surveys, experiments, content analysis, computational methods, network analysis, and observations).

**Against this background, this preconference aims to showcase the latest research on the role of digital media in disease prevention and management from diverse intra- and interdisciplinary perspectives, on various levels (individual, interpersonal, organizational, and societal), and on various methodological approaches.** We are especially interested in larger-scale projects and consortia that strive

beyond small experimental or cross-sectional studies to contribute to the multilevel and multifaceted phenomenon of digital media in disease prevention and management.

**We focus on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), also referred to as chronic diseases, since they belong to the most common and economically significant health problems worldwide.** Considering the high number of people living with chronic diseases and the long-term strains they put on both individuals and society, effective prevention and treatment measures are necessary to facilitate the prevention of and coping with NCDs.

Hence, the overarching theme of this preconference concerns the role of digital media in the prevention, communication, and management of non-communicable diseases. We invite submissions related, but not limited, to the following topics in the context of digital media and NCDs:

- The role of AI and other technical advancements
- Digital media use: patterns, repertoires, and determinants of health-related use
- Digital media effects on psychological and health outcomes
- The role of health providers, peers, social support
- The role of organizations (technical providers, health institutions, health systems)
- The role of public and political discourses
- Ethical and privacy issues, equality and inequality
- Cultural issues, international comparisons
- Methodological advancements

### **Dates and Conference Format**

This full-day onsite preconference on June 12 will feature three sessions, framed by a keynote by Prof. Dr. Anne-Linda Camerini (Institute of Public Health at Università della Svizzera italiana, Switzerland).

We particularly encourage submissions from participants in the Global South, early-career researchers, PhD students, and practitioners to share their innovative perspectives, concepts, and findings. To facilitate participation for scholars from Tier C countries and early-career scholars from Tier A and B countries without access to funding for the preconference, we plan to offer up to five registration waiver slots. To apply, please submit your application and a short CV via email to Alexandra Lux ([alexandra.lux@ifkw.lmu.de](mailto:alexandra.lux@ifkw.lmu.de)).

All submissions will undergo a competitive evaluation by the preconference committee and anonymous reviewers.

### **Submission Guidelines**

The preconference will accept two types of submissions, both in the form of extended abstracts:

1. Presentation and workshop sessions: Scholars are invited to present theory-driven, larger-scale projects. These presentations can cover projects at any stage—planning, in progress, or completed.

2. High-density interactive poster sessions: We encourage early-career scholars to showcase their projects to an international audience, receive feedback, and expand their

global networks. Poster presentations will begin with brief 5-minute introductions, followed by interactive discussions as the audience engages with the presenters.

Please indicate the track of your submission on the title page.

All preconference submissions must include a fully blinded extended abstract (no identifying author information) for review. Abstracts should be 850-1,000 words (excluding references, tables, and figures) and must follow APA 7th guidelines.

The conference organizers promote open science practices and welcome submissions of pre-registrations and replications.

Please submit your extended abstracts to [alexandra.lux@ifkw.lmu.de](mailto:alexandra.lux@ifkw.lmu.de).

The deadline for submissions is **January 31<sup>st</sup> 2025, 12:00 noon ICA headquarters time (EDT)**. Submissions will undergo blind peer review, and acceptance notifications will be sent out on February 28th 2025.

Organizers: Constanze Rossmann (LMU/GER), Alexandra Lux (LMU/GER), Nehama Lewis (U of Haifa/IL), Veronika Karnowski (Chemnitz U of Technology/GER), Claudia Riesmeyer (LMU/GER), Rebecca Kammerer (LMU/GER), Natalie Rödel (Chemnitz U of Technology/GER), Nariman Sawalha (LMU/GER)

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