
Abstract

Key Enablers to Boost Digital Health Solutions in Latin America

Regina Morán-Reséndiz^{1*}, MSc[†]; Catalina Ruiz-Arias^{2*}, MSc[†]

¹Facultad de Ingeniería, Universidad Panamericana, Ciudad de México, Mexico

²Universidad Ean, Bogota, Colombia

[†]Movement Health 2030

* all authors contributed equally

Corresponding Author:

Regina Morán-Reséndiz, MSc

Facultad de Ingeniería

Universidad Panamericana

Augusto Rodin 498

Ciudad de México, 0390

Mexico

Phone: 52 4424653135

Email: contacto@reginamorán.com.mx

Abstract

Background: COVID-19 has exposed the fragility of global health systems. However, the pandemic is perceived to have boosted the use of technology and accelerated digital health solutions (DHS). In Latin America, DHS can increase accessibility and provide more efficient health services. Various key players have relevant roles for innovation within the health care systems. For this study, we focused on health-tech start-ups (*developers*) and health care providers (*implementers*) who can cocreate and develop new health care solutions.

Objective: This research aimed to explore the aspects that boost innovation in the health care ecosystem in Latin America, based on the 5 key aspects of the Innovation Readiness Levels: market, technology, organization, partnerships, and risk.

Methods: For this research, a qualitative study was conducted using the 5 key aspects of the Innovation Readiness Levels. Two types of organizations were selected: health-tech start-ups (*developers*) and health care providers (*implementers*). A total of 12 professionals from Latin America were interviewed. For each interview, quotes related to the 5 aspects were selected and subclustered to find relationships.

Results: Based on the discovered relationships, 7 aspects to boost DHS in Latin America were identified: agility to respond, facilitating collaboration, building and sharing knowledge, creating user-centered solutions, economic resources and sustainability, ease of technological development and adoption, and reaching beyond hospitals. The first 4 aspects could apply to other regions outside Latin America. The last 3 are related to regional challenges in Latin America. Obstacles and calls to action were identified for each aspect.

Conclusions: To boost DHS in Latin America, it is necessary to have a complete overview of the patient's journey and consider all the users involved to understand their needs and identify opportunities to develop new solutions. This will contribute to the improvement of health solutions and patient outreach. Future research is suggested to develop a better understanding of these aspects in the Latin American countries that were not included in this research and to validate whether these are the only key aspects needed.

Conflicts of Interest: None declared.

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digital health; Latin America; health care; innovation

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