LUNCH SERIES

ETHICS | AI | HEALTH

19 September 2024 12.30-1.30 pm CET online

Jantina de Vries
(University of Cape Town)

Opportunities and challenges for Ethics, AI and Health in South Africa

10 October 2024 2.00-3.00 pm CET online

Nathalie Smuha
(KU Leuven)

The ethics of AI-therapists

Brian Earp
(University of Oxford)

Digital Doppelgangers in Healthcare: From Substituted Judgment to "Life" Extension

7 November 2024 12.30-1.30 pm CET hybrid

Bjoern Eskofier
(FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg)

AI for Future Healthcare

21 November 2024 12.30-1.30 pm CET hybrid

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Join us for a fun and informative lunch on Ethics, AI and Health!

We invite international experts from a variety of fields to share their cutting-edge research with us. Enjoy your lunch and a 30-minute presentation, followed by 30 minutes of stimulating discussion and Q&A.

This Lunch series is organized by the team of the Chair of Social Ethics, University Bonn in collaboration with the Transdisciplinary Research Area "Life & Health" (TRA 3), University of Bonn and the Collaborative Research Centre EmpkinS.

Thursday
via Zoom

Registration

https://eveeno.com/240386573

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About
Jantina de Vries

Jantina de Vries is Director of the Ethics Lab and Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Cape Town. The Ethics Lab cultivates convivial scholarship for a more just world and fosters transformative ethics scholarship that centres Africa as the context and driver for global health ethics. Jantina is a leading expert in the ethics of African genomics research. She was a member of the WHO Genome Editing Expert Advisory Committee, founding Chair of the H3Africa Working Group on Ethics, and is currently a member of the Ethics Board of Médecins Sans Frontières and the Steering Committee of the Global Forum for Bioethics in Research. Her work is widely cited and has informed the development of guidelines for genomics research across the African continent.

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About
Nathalie Smuha

Nathalie A. Smuha is a legal scholar and philosopher at the KU Leuven Faculty of Law, where she examines legal and ethical questions around digital technologies and their impact on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. She is also an Adjunct Professor at NYU School of Law and formerly held visiting positions at the University of Chicago (2023) and the University of Birmingham (2021). Before her academic turn, she practiced law as a member of the Brussels and New York Bar and worked at the European Commission (DG Connect), where she coordinated the High-Level Expert Group on AI and contributed to Europe's AI strategy. She is the author of Algorithmic Rule By Law: How Algorithmic Regulation in the Public Sector Erodes the Rule of Law (CUP, 2024).

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Nathalie Smuha

KU Leuven

The ethics of AI-therapists

AI chatbots are increasingly used for a variety of purposes, including therapeutic ones. From offering a listening 'ear' to providing more substantive therapeutic help, ever more individuals are starting to rely on chatbots to cope with their mental health, and are thereby also forming emotional attachments with such bots. This trend is further encouraged by a global shortage of mental health care providers and the unaffordability of such care for many, against the background of an ever-rising number of people who require help. Chatbots are hence often portrayed as a potential solution to this problem, yet their use also raises numerous concerns. In this talk, I will focus on the ethical conundrums that arise in this context and discuss the main questions we should be asking before accepting AI-therapists.

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About
Brian Earp

Brian Earp is a philosopher, cognitive scientist, and bioethicist at the University of Oxford. Brian is the Associate Director of the Yale-Hastings Program in Ethics and Health Policy at Yale University and the Hastings Center, Senior Research Fellow in Moral Psychology at the Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics at the University of Oxford, and Co-Director of the Oxford Experimental Bioethics Lab. In 2024, Brian joined the National University of Singapore as a tenured Associate Professor of Biomedical Ethics at the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and started to direct the Oxford-NUS Centre for Neuroethics and Society. Brian is a member of the UK Young Academy and an Associate Editor of several journals, including the Journal of Medical Ethics. Brian's research covers relational moral psychology; philosophy of technology; research ethics, reproducibility, and open science; ethics of AI and human enhancement; philosophy of love, sex and gender; bodily autonomy and integrity, and children's rights, among other areas.

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Brian Earp

University of Oxford

Digital Doppelgangers in Healthcare:
From Substituted Judgment to "Life" Extension

It is currently possible to 'fine-tune' large language models (LLMs), such as Chat GPT, on individual-specific information (e.g., large volumes of written text or speech transcriptions), allowing for the creation of a 'digital doppelganger' or psychological 'digital twin' of a person (Porsdam Mann, Earp, et al., 2023).

With colleagues, I recently proposed that an appropriately fine-tuned LLM could encode an individual's preferences and values, such that it could potentially be used as a 'personalised patient preference predictor' (P4) to aid with proxy decision-making in cases of incapacity (Earp et al., 2024). In this talk, I propose to discuss forthcoming work that builds on this idea, by considering other potential uses to which a personalized LLM like the 'P4' could be put.

In particular, I explore whether an LLM-based digital doppelganger like the P4 could help an individual achieve some of the underlying aims or purported goods associated with life-extension projects, even if it could not literally extend a person's biological life, subjective consciousness, or personhood. I argue that, in certain circumstances and with respect to certain types of aims (e.g., leaving a legacy, maintaining aspects of valued relationships), a digital doppelganger could serve as a "second-best" option to life extension, and should therefore be included in ethical discussions about the latter. I also consider a number of objections to this idea and offer some provisional responses.

References

Earp, B. D., Porsdam Mann, S., Allen, J., Salloch, S., Suren, V., Jongsma, K., ... & Savulescu, J. (2024). A personalized patient preference predictor for substituted judgments in healthcare: technically feasible and ethically desirable. The American Journal of Bioethics, 24(7), 13-26.

Porsdam Mann, S., Earp, B. D., Møller, N., Vynn, S., & Savulescu, J. (2023). AUTOGEN: A personalized large language model for academic enhancement — Ethics and proof of principle. The American Journal of Bioethics, 23(10), 28-41.

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About
Bjoern Eskofier

Bjoern M. Eskofier heads the Machine Learning and Data Analytics (MaD) Lab at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuernberg (FAU). He is also the founding head of the FAU's Department of Artificial Intelligence in Biomedical Engineering (AIBE) and Co-Director of the German Research Foundation collaborative research center "EmpkinS". Since April 2023, Bjoern has been an associate principal investigator at the Helmholtz Zentrum Munich. He is the author of more than 400 peer-reviewed articles, started three spinoff companies, and won several medical-technical research awards. He was a visiting professor at Harvard Medical School, MIT, and Stanford University. Bjoern has defined his research agenda to revolve around contributions to a "Digital Health Ecosystem". His digital health research philosophy is that only multidisciplinary teams have the tools to actually implement changes in healthcare.

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Bjoern Eskofier

FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg

AI for Future Healthcare

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) methods are currently a "hot topic" in medicine. The driver of AI or ML method employment, in medicine as well as in other domains, is the availability of digital data. Here, the potential of delivering more objective, precise, and personalized medical diagnosis and care decisions is by far not reached. The reason is that the current healthcare data infrastructure, both nationally and internationally, lacks interoperability and interfaces on several different levels (individual, institutional, device, and provider level, just to name a few). The health data infrastructure for future healthcare needs to address this. One favored solution is "personal health dataspaces", which put individuals at the center of health data (figure) and create new opportunities for AI and ML applications.

The talk will present the core idea of personal health dataspaces and hint at some opportunities for the future AI-driven "digital" healthcare system that emerge from it. It will open up new possibilities in healthcare, which will hopefully contribute to delivering more objective, precise, and personalized medical diagnosis and care decisions.