ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL COUNCILS OF AFRICA
26TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

REGULATION IN THE ERA OF AI

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AVANI RESORT, LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA

Health Professions Council of Zambia

2024

CONFERENCE REPORT

ABBREVIATIONS

AMCOA	Association of Medical Councils of Africa
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
EHR	Electronic Health Records
FSMB	Federation of State Medical Boards
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GPS	Global Positioning System
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
HPCZ	Health Professions Council of Zambia
HWF	Health Workforce
IAMRA	International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
MCCD	Medical Certification of Cause of Death
NITDA	National Information and Technology Development Agency
OCR	Optical Character Recognition
PHI	Protected Health Information
PII	Personal Identifiable Information
WHO	World Health Organization

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FOREWARD

Health Regulators worldwide currently face significant challenges that impact our regulatory systems. These include innumerable factors, such as political dynamics, geopolitical influences, the changing demands, and the rapid technological advancements, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Health regulators play a crucial role in regulating AI in healthcare to ensure patient safety, data privacy, and the efficacy of AI-driven healthcare applications. The objective is to strike a balance between fostering innovation and safeguarding patients and their data.

Within this intricate regulatory landscape, there's a growing need for dialogue on strategies and insights that would aid regulators to have a clear understanding on the use of AI in health and how these systems operate. Regulators need to take a deep dive into whether AI would be advantageous or disadvantageous to the users, which includes the healthcare professionals and patients.

The 26th Annual Conference 2024 served as a timely and essential platform for healthcare policymakers, regulators, practitioners, and stakeholders to come together and explore the profound impact of AI and innovation on healthcare governance and regulation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PROF JOEL OKULLO

AMCOA PRESIDENT

The Management Committee of AMCOA wishes to extend its heartfelt gratitude to all individuals and organisations whose unwavering support and contributions made the AMCOA Annual Conference 2024 a resounding success.

Sincere appreciation and acknowledgement go to the Ministry of Health Zambia and the Health Professions Council of Zambia (HPCZ) for graciously hosting this significant event.

Appreciation equally goes to all delegates representing various health professional regulatory bodies, whose active engagement and insightful contributions enriched the discussions and workshops throughout the event.

Special appreciation is extended to the Ministers, Speakers, Session Chairs, and Conference Delegates for sharing their knowledge, experiences, and best practices. We also acknowledge the generous support of our sponsors and partners, whose generosity and commitment played a pivotal role in ensuring the success of this conference.

Finally, we express our gratitude to all HPCZ staff members, AMCOA Secretariat, volunteers, and support personnel involved in the planning, coordination, and execution of this conference. Your hard work, dedication, and attention to detail were instrumental in delivering a seamless and impactful event.

AMCOA reaffirms its commitment to working towards advancing the quality, safety, and effectiveness of healthcare delivery for the benefit of all.

PROF. JOEL OKULLO
AMCOA PRESIDENT

3. INTRODUCTION

ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL COUNCILS OF AFRICA (AMCOA)

The **Association of Medical Councils of Africa (AMCOA)** is a pivotal organization that unites Health Regulatory Authorities across the African continent. It is dedicated to safeguarding public interest by advocating for and upholding high standards in medical education, registration, and regulation. AMCOA serves as a critical platform for the continuous exchange of information and best practices among its member regulatory authorities, fostering a collaborative environment that enhances the quality of healthcare across Africa.

The association's efforts are multifaceted, focusing on several key areas:

1. **Medical Education and Training Standards**: AMCOA sets and promotes rigorous standards for medical education and training, ensuring that healthcare professionals are well-prepared to meet the demands of modern medical practice.
2. **Ethics Guidelines**: By developing and disseminating comprehensive ethics guidelines, AMCOA helps healthcare professionals navigate the complex ethical landscape of medical practice, ensuring that patient care is conducted with integrity and respect.
3. **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**: Recognizing the importance of lifelong learning in the medical field, AMCOA encourages continuous professional development among healthcare practitioners. This commitment to CPD ensures that medical professionals remain knowledgeable about the latest advancements in medicine and healthcare delivery.
4. **Quality Healthcare Provision**: Through its guidelines and standards, AMCOA strives to ensure that quality healthcare services are consistently delivered across member states. This includes providing guidance on various aspects of healthcare delivery to improve patient outcomes and public health.

Overall, AMCOA plays a crucial role in the enhancement of healthcare systems across Africa. By fostering cooperation and knowledge sharing among medical regulatory authorities, the association helps to maintain high standards of medical practice and ultimately contributes to the well-being of the continent's population.

THE HOST | HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA (HPCZ)

The Health Professions Council of Zambia (HPCZ) is established by the Health Professions Act No. 24 of 2009, Laws of the Republic of Zambia. The Council is mandated to regulate the Health Sector, and its principal functions are as follows:

- Register health practitioners and regulate their professional conduct.
- License and regulate all health facilities both public and private; and
- Accredit healthcare services which are provided by health facilities

4. CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The 26th Annual Conference of the Association of Medical Councils of Africa was hosted by the Health Professions Council of Zambia at the Avani Victoria Falls Resort in Livingstone, Zambia, from 11th to 15th August 2024.

This conference brought together a distinguished assembly of health professionals, regulators, and policymakers from across the continent. The conference focused on the transformative role of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare regulation, under the theme **"Regulation in the Era of Artificial Intelligence."**

This timely theme highlighted the critical need to adapt and modernise regulatory frameworks in response to the rapid integration of AI technologies into healthcare systems.

AI is revolutionising the healthcare landscape, offering significant advancements in diagnostics, treatment, and patient management. However, these innovations also pose new challenges for regulators. Ensuring that AI-driven healthcare tools uphold patient safety, ethical standards, and equitable access to care is becoming an urgent priority. The conference provided a platform to explore these multifaceted issues, stressing the importance of creating a regulatory environment that fosters innovation while safeguarding public health.

The conference was aimed to:

- Understand AI's Impact by exploring how AI is reshaping healthcare delivery and its implications for health practitioner regulation.
- Develop Regulatory Frameworks by formulating strategies to effectively regulate AI applications in healthcare.
- Promote Ethical Standards by addressing ethical considerations and ensure that AI in healthcare adheres to high standards of practice.
- Enhance Collaboration by fostering collaboration among African health regulatory councils to share knowledge and best practices in AI regulation.

Networking sessions provided attendees with the opportunity to build alliances and collaborate on future projects. These interactions were instrumental in fostering a sense of community and shared purpose among the diverse group of professionals present.

5. OPENING CEREMONY

WELCOME ADDRESS

Hon. Credo Nanjuwa, MP Minister of Southern Province

The Provincial Minister, Hon. Credo Nanjuwa, MP, extended a warm welcome to the esteemed guests attending the AMCOA Opening Ceremony.

He acknowledged the presence of distinguished figures, including Hon. Elijah Muchima, the Minister of Health, who joined in absentia, Hon. Dr Margaret Muhunga Mugisa, the State Minister of Health from Uganda, and other prominent officials and representatives from across Africa.

The Minister expressed his honour in welcoming delegates to Livingstone and the Southern Province, emphasising the significance of their presence at the 26th AMCOA Council. He noted that this gathering highlighted a shared commitment to the regulation of health in Africa. He further remarked that the theme of the conference, **"Regulation of Health in the Era of Artificial Intelligence",** was both timely and crucial.

Hon. Nanjuwa further pointed out that the conference would provide a vital platform for African medical regulators to exchange knowledge and ideas on how to utilise AI in health regulation effectively. In closing, the minister welcomed the delegates once again and encouraged them to take time to visit the Victoria Falls and other tourist sites in Zambia's tourist capital, wishing them productive deliberations during the conference.

HPCZ WELCOME ADDRESS | PROF. MULINDI MWANAHAMUNTU - CHAIRPERSON

Professor Mwanahamuntu oversees the regulation of health services in Zambia, including the registration of health practitioners, licensing and regulation of health facilities, accreditation of healthcare services, and approval of training programmes for health practitioners.

In his opening address he expressed Honor in welcoming the delegates to the 26th Annual Conference of the Association of Medical Councils of Africa (AMCOA), highlighting the privilege of having the Guest of Honour, the Honourable Minister of Health, Dr Elijah Muchima, and ministers from Zambia and Uganda in attendance. Prof. Mwanahamuntu noted that indeed the presence of these dignitaries was a reflection of the importance their governments place on regulatory authorities and their commitment to advancing healthcare regulation. He further extended a warm welcome to all delegates from AMCOA member states and affiliate members. He opined that the conference theme adequately addressed the transformative impact of AI on global healthcare systems. AI was recognised as a force with the potential to improve healthcare delivery, patient outcomes, and operational efficiency.

Prof. Mwanahamuntu reiterated the Health Professions Council of Zambia's (HPCZ) commitment to supporting the integration of AI into healthcare, acknowledging the need for regulations that ensure the safe and effective use of AI technologies. He concluded with a commitment to continue engaging in discussions, workshops, and sessions that explore the challenges and opportunities AI presents in healthcare. He expressed gratitude to the guests, delegates, and organisers, encouraging all to seize the opportunity to collaborate and innovate for the future of healthcare in Africa.

AMCOA WELCOME ADDRESS | PROF. JOEL OKULLO - PRESIDENT

Prof. Okullo is currently the President of AMCOA and the Chairman of the Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners Council. He graduated from Makerere University Medical School in 1973 and has a Master of Science in Physiology from the University College London (1976). He serves on a team that monitors the Medical Schools in the East African Community states. He is the Company Health Advisor for Shell (Vivo Energy) and works closely with other members of the world-wide team to promote Health, Safety and Environment in Shell operations.

Prof. Okullo warmly greeted all government officials and delegates attending the 26th Annual AMCOA conference. He highlighted that the primary focus of the conference was to discuss the successful integration of AI into healthcare regulation amidst rapid technological advancements. Prof. Okullo expressed that while AI has tremendous potential to improve healthcare delivery and management, it also presents significant challenges and risks that could compromise the quality of care if ignored. He pointed out that AI's ability to collect, process, and analyze vast amounts of data raises concerns about data collection, storage, manipulation, and the swift evolution of these technologies.

In this context, he emphasized the necessity for regulators to gain a thorough understanding of AI systems, noting that the conference aimed to promote knowledge sharing on the safe and effective application of AI. Prof. Okullo called for the establishment of regulatory frameworks that not only harness AI's potential but also address its excesses, ensuring compliance with ethical standards and practices. He stated that comprehending both the advantages and disadvantages of AI, along with providing clinical staff with AI training, is essential for safe implementation.

In his address, Prof. Okullo outlined the following key areas for the conference's focus:

- **AI's Role in Healthcare Regulation**
- **Dual Nature of AI**
- **Need for Robust Regulatory Frameworks**
- **Ethical Standards and Safeguards**
- **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing**
- **AI Training for Healthcare Professionals**

He expressed his heartfelt appreciation to the Health Professions Council of Zambia (HPCZ) for hosting and organizing the conference, as well as to all key stakeholders and partners who contributed to its remarkable success.

In closing, Professor Okullo encouraged all delegates to engage and exchange their knowledge and experiences with one another to enhance healthcare across Africa. He then officially declared the conference open.

GUEST SPEAKER ADDRESS | MR ROY MUYELU

Mr Muyelu is the CEO of Probase Group, a company providing cutting-edge services and solutions specialising in payments and collections for the public sector both locally and internationally. He serves as a board member at the American Chamber of Commerce in Zambia showcasing his dedication to fostering international business relations.

Mr Muyelu began by acknowledging the established protocols and expressed his deep honour at addressing the distinguished assembly of experts. He underscored the importance of discussing Artificial Intelligence within the context of medical practice, especially considering the diverse sectors his company serves, including healthcare.

Mr Muyelu recognised that AI presents a unique set of challenges for regulators, particularly regarding the complexities involved in ensuring patient safety and maintaining ethical standards. However, he also underscored the substantial opportunities AI offers in transforming healthcare delivery. He pointed out that, with careful integration, AI has the potential to revolutionise diagnostics, enhance patient outcomes, and streamline healthcare processes.

In his remarks, Mr Muyelu stressed the need to strike a delicate balance between fostering innovation and maintaining regulatory compliance. He emphasised that regulatory frameworks must protect patient safety and uphold ethical standards without stifling progress or innovation in the healthcare sector. Acknowledging the regulatory difficulties in AI adoption, he called for forward-thinking policies that encourage the responsible development and application of AI technologies.

Mr Muyelu also highlighted that the limited exposure of healthcare professionals to AI technologies was a critical barrier to AI adoption. He suggested that AI should be incorporated into the training curricula of healthcare practitioners from the outset, so they are better equipped to leverage its capabilities in clinical practice. According to Mr Muyelu, this early exposure would foster a workforce that is knowledgeable, adaptable, and capable of navigating AI's complexities. In addition to improving clinical practice, Mr Muyelu identified AI's potential to enhance medical tourism across Africa. He argued that by integrating AI into healthcare, African nations could attract patients seeking cutting-edge medical treatments. Furthermore, AI could improve access to specialist healthcare services in remote and underserved regions, addressing gaps in healthcare infrastructure and providing patients with better and timelier care.

In closing, Mr Muyelu reiterated the importance of collaboration between regulators and key stakeholder in ensuring that AI is safely and effectively integrated into healthcare systems. His speech set the tone for the conference's discussions, underlining the importance of balancing innovation with safety and ethics in the rapidly evolving landscape of AI in healthcare.

ADDRESS BY THE GUEST OF HONOUR | HONOURABLE MINISTER OF HEALTH (ZAMBIA), DR. ELIJAH JULAKI MUCHIMA

Hon. Dr Elijah Julaki Muchima expressed great honour in addressing the assembly and began by congratulating the Health Professions Council of Zambia (HPCZ) for successfully organising the event.

Hon. Dr Muchima acknowledged the critical role of HPCZ in safeguarding healthcare standards through the regulation and monitoring of health practitioners, facilities, and training institutions in Zambia.

He also paid tribute to AMCOA for choosing Zambia as the host country, 28 years after last conference was held in Zambia.

He warmly welcomed international visitors to Zambia and specifically Livingstone, the nation's tourist capital, inviting them to experience the hospitality and natural beauty, including the renowned Victoria Falls. He then shifted focus to the conference theme, "Regulation in the Era of Artificial Intelligence," recognizing AI as a paradigm shift in healthcare that offers opportunities for improved delivery, patient outcomes, and system optimization.

He highlighted AI's transformative potential, including predictive analytics, precision diagnostics, and AI-assisted surgeries. However, Hon. Dr Muchima stressed the importance of addressing the challenges accompanying AI, such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the risk of perpetuating inequalities. He called for robust regulatory frameworks that ensure AI technologies are safe, ethical, and equitable.

The speaker urged collaboration between governments, healthcare providers, and regulators to create guidelines that balance innovation with patient safety and ethical standards. He underscored the need for ongoing dialogue and knowledge sharing, particularly through platforms like the conference, to navigate the complexities of AI in healthcare.

In closing, the speaker reaffirmed Zambia's commitment to leveraging AI in a way that aligns with the country's values, ensuring rigorous standards of practice and regulation. He reiterated his gratitude to HPCZ and the attendees for their dedication to advancing healthcare in this new era and encouraged all to engage enthusiastically in the discussions ahead.

6. MINISTERS' ROUNDTABLE

The next session was the ministers' roundtable. This was a session where the Honourable Ministers present were asked to critically highlight the role of Artificial Intelligence within their various sectors.

HON. DR MARGARET MUHUNGA MUGISA STATE MINISTER OF HEALTH – UGANDA

The Minister of Health from Uganda discussed how AI has significantly impacted the country's ability to manage health crises. She highlighted that during the Ebola outbreak in 2022, Uganda was able to contain the epidemic within 69 days, a task that would have previously taken several months or even years. Similarly, Uganda effectively managed the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to President Museveni being honoured in Canada this year for his leadership. The Minister stressed that AI is a powerful tool in enhancing diagnostics, but she also stressed the need for Africa to catch up with the rest of the world in AI adoption, as the continent is currently lagging behind. She called for improvements in power and ICT infrastructure to support AI and advocated for using AI to monitor borders and curb epidemics. Additionally, she warned of the dangers of poor data management, urging that AI systems be carefully monitored to avoid the problem of "garbage in, garbage out."

HON. CREDO NANJUWA MP MINISTER OF SOUTHERN PROVINCE

The Minister of Southern Province addressed how the province can leverage AI to predict and prevent pandemics. He expressed enthusiasm for the conference, noting that it followed another significant event focused on AI in general. The province, he said, is actively embracing AI to improve disease surveillance, not only in human health but also in animal health. The Minister emphasised the province's commitment to using AI to enhance efficiency in responding to epidemics. He assured that the province is prepared to implement regulatory measures set by the Ministry of Health for AI utilisation. He stressed that achieving this will require substantial infrastructure development to support AI integration effectively.

HON. RODNEY MALINDI SIKUMBA MP MINISTER OF TOURISM

The Zambian Minister of Tourism was asked about promoting medical tourism through AI. He expressed pride in hosting delegates from 26 countries to discuss this critical issue. The minister outlined the government's efforts in infrastructure development, including expanding health and hospitality facilities. He noted that some patients might prefer to spend the final stages of their lives in serene environments like Victoria Falls, and the government plans to expand health facilities to accommodate such needs. He highlighted the necessity of reliable technology and, consequently, the need for expanding power infrastructure to sustain these advancements. The minister acknowledged concerns about data protection and ethical practices in AI-driven healthcare. He expressed excitement about integrating AI into the broader tourism agenda, particularly in promoting medical tourism. His call to action was clear: enhance power and ICT infrastructure to support the sustained use of AI and technology in tourism and healthcare.

The discussion concluded with a strong consensus on the transformative potential of AI in healthcare and tourism. The ministers collectively called attention to the need for significant infrastructure development, particularly in power and ICT, to fully harness AI's capabilities. They underscored the importance of ethical standards and data protection in AI applications and reiterated their commitment to fostering collaboration across sectors to ensure AI is integrated effectively and safely. The discussion ended with a call to action for continued investment in technology and regulatory frameworks to support AI-driven advancements in Africa.

7. PLENARY SESSIONS

Building on the groundwork established by the attending ministers, the conference moved forward into plenary sessions focused on various subthemes.

Each session featured expert speakers and panelists who examined the present policy landscape, analyzing the intentions versus the realities, while highlighting the essential changes that policymakers need to contemplate.

PLENARY SESSION 1: TRAINING AND RESEARCH ROLE OF AI

Session Chair: Dr Muhumpu Kafwamfwa

This session highlighted the need for regulatory systems to detect plagiarism and piracy in healthcare training and research, ensuring the production of high-quality healthcare practitioners from training institutions. Discussions showcased how AI, while beneficial in assignments and research writing, can also generate false evidence, which should be identified and managed. A regulatory framework was deemed essential to guide the use of AI in health practitioner education, ensuring its responsible and effective application.

GUEST SPEAKER | PROF. RICARDO LÉON-BÓRQUEZ-PRESIDENT | WORLD FEDERATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION (WFME)

Title: *Role of Artificial Intelligence and the WFME Standards*

Prof. Ricardo Léon-Bórquez emphasised the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on medical education, noting how it reshapes traditional learning into more dynamic and interactive experiences. He highlighted the integration of AI in health and medical disciplines, which has led to personalised and adaptive learning environments that enhance educational outcomes. The use of AI in medical education is particularly notable, with applications like virtual patient simulations and adaptive learning algorithms providing hands-on practice without the risks associated with real-life patient care.

Prof. Léon-Bórquez further explained that AI's ability to incorporate the latest medical research into learning materials ensures that students are exposed to the most current and relevant information. However, the success of these AI applications is heavily dependent on access to rich medical datasets, which drive the realism and effectiveness of simulations. He stressed the importance of ethical considerations, particularly regarding data privacy, consent, and security, when utilising AI in medical education.

Ethical vigilance, he said, is essential to balance the technological benefits of AI with the humanistic values of healthcare. The potential for AI to reinforce biases or infringe on privacy calls for collaboration between educators, developers, and policymakers to design AI tools that

uphold ethical standards. He reiterated that AI must be used responsibly to enhance, rather than detract from, the core human aspects of healthcare.

Looking to the future, Prof. Léon-Bórquez recognised both the opportunities and ethical challenges AI presents. He called for a commitment to principles such as autonomy, justice, beneficence, and non-maleficence, which should guide the responsible use of AI in educational practices. The WFME is actively considering the development of new standards for AI education and updates to the Recognition Programme for Basic Medical Education to ensure AI's responsible and equitable implementation in medical education.

PANEL DISCUSSION

PROF. GROESBECK P PARHAM | SENIOR CLINICAL EXPERT AND PRIMARY INVESTIGATOR FOR A UNITAID

Prof. Parham highlighted the pioneering study he conducted with Prof. Mwanahamuntu on using AI for the diagnosis and treatment of cervical cancer. This innovative approach allows practitioners to take a picture of the cervix and, within 45 seconds, determine the presence of cervical cancer lesions. Initially launched in Zambia, the app has since expanded to five other countries, including Malawi, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, and Senegal. The study involves comparing traditional nurse-led screenings with AI-assisted diagnoses to assess the accuracy and efficiency of the technology.

Prof. Parham discussed the global potential of AI, predicting that the market could reach 1.3 trillion of dollars, and emphasised the need for regulations that support innovation while ensuring safety and ethical standards. He urged that AI regulations be customised to address African-specific challenges, advocating for the adoption of AI in healthcare while safeguarding practices to ensure they meet the continent's unique needs.

MR THADEE VUGUZIGA | DEPUTY REGISTRAR AND DEPUTY CEO OF RWANDA MEDICAL AND DENTAL COUNCIL

Mr Thadee, discussed the negative impacts of AI in medical education, highlighting the lack of AI curriculum, ethical issues such as the marginalisation of human judgment, and the potential for academic dishonesty. He cautioned that overreliance on AI could hinder the development of interpersonal skills and undermine human judgment, while also raising concerns about data privacy, security, and biases in AI algorithms. In his systematic review of studies from 2010 to 2024, Mr Vuguziga identified several ethical and practical concerns, including challenges in maintaining data privacy, the quality of data used in AI research, and the potential loss of essential research skills due to automation. He also pointed out the complexities of intellectual property ownership with AI-generated content. Looking forward, Mr Vuguziga called for strong regulatory oversight, ethical standards that respect autonomy and privacy, and a comprehensive legal framework to address data protection and AI's legal implications. He concluded by emphasising the importance of balancing innovation with safety and ethical considerations to maximise AI's benefits in medical education and research.

PROF. ABDULRAHEEM O MAHMOUD | FOUNDATION CHARTER MEMBER OF THE NASCENT NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AI PRACTITIONERS IN NIGERIA

Prof. Mahmoud presented an insightful overview of AI in healthcare, focusing on the current state and challenges in Nigeria. He highlighted that while 435 consultants were surveyed, 94% had not received any formal AI training. Despite this, 90% of respondents were positive about the potential of AI in healthcare, with an equal percentage willing to adopt AI tools. Additionally, 83% of the participants agreed that AI could significantly improve healthcare outcomes. However, Prof. Mahmoud also identified key challenges in incorporating AI in Nigeria, such as poor infrastructure, apathy, and resistance to change among medical professionals, a shortage of experts, lack of big data, and intrinsic concerns related to AI. He stressed the urgent need for stronger regulatory mechanisms and harmonisation of institutional, national, and regional policies. He called for operational guidelines that foster collaboration between the Ministry of Health, education sectors, and key stakeholders, aligning AI policies and focusing on capacity building. In conclusion, Prof. Mahmoud asserted that AI tools have shown great potential in enhancing medical training and research in Nigeria, offering promising opportunities for the future of healthcare.

PROF. LIONEL GREEN-THOMPSON | DEAN FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Prof. Green-Thompson delivered a presentation titled **"Intersection of Accreditation of AI – Histories and Future".** He echoed the Ugandan Health Minister's call for the effective optimisation of AI in health practice and education. Prof. Green-Thompson emphasised the importance of developing AI curricula that balance machine learning with AI ethics, ensuring that healthcare professionals understand the foundations of AI and its social and ethical implications. He also highlighted the need for honesty and integrity in AI usage, particularly addressing concerns around the use of tools like ChatGPT to paraphrase text. He stressed that while such practices may evade plagiarism checks, they ultimately amount to cheating and dishonesty, undermining the core values of academic and professional integrity.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND Q&A

- Need to ensure regulation of AI and its incorporation into various fields of medicine.
- AI-powered virtual microscopy is used in histology, and AI tools have been integrated into examination modules for medical students.
- The review of regulatory guidelines should be realigned to keep pace with the rapid advancements in AI. The current lengthy process, where guidelines take years to be updated, there is a risk that regulations will lag AI developments.
- On the feasibility of achieving personalised learning through AI, it was agreed that while personalised learning is possible in principle with AI, it may not be practical in many African settings due to the reliance on standardised curricula and assessment methods.

PLENARY SESSION 2: SAFETY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Session Chair: Ms Yurisa Naidoo

The session focused on the need for regulators to ensure that AI-driven health practices meet quality and safety standards. Regulators need to ensure responsible use, monitoring performance, and ensure compliance with medical guidelines and ethical standards for Patient Care. Under this subtheme, regulators should also share the best practices guidelines for Telehealth.

GUEST SPEAKER | DR LESA S WRIGHT - CHIEF AI OFFICER, UK PSYCHIATRY UK

TITLE: *Magic, Time, Opportunity: Navigating AI's Role in Modern Healthcare*

Dr Wright explored the dual nature of artificial intelligence (AI) as both a significant opportunity and a potential risk in healthcare. He emphasised that AI's key attributes—its scale, speed, and adaptability—are what makes it both dangerous and highly valuable. These attributes demand careful regulation and integration within healthcare systems to harness AI's potential while minimising risks.

A significant part of the presentation focused on the challenges of regulating AI. Dr Wright noted that the rapid pace of technological advancements often outpaces regulatory frameworks, leading to a proliferation of unregulated AI products. This regulatory gap poses serious risks to patient safety and healthcare integrity. He explained that regulators, who often act as gatekeepers, can be risk-averse and lack the necessary capacity to keep pace with AI developments, further complicating the situation.

Dr Wright also highlighted the distinction between human and machine capabilities in healthcare. While AI systems can mimic human empathy and decision-making to some extent, they lack the true experience and judgment that human healthcare professionals bring to patient care. The ability to empathise with patients and make informed decisions based on life experience is something AI cannot replicate. As a result, he stressed that AI should be viewed as a tool to enhance, rather than replace, the role of clinicians.
In terms of AI's safe integration into healthcare, Dr Wright proposed a gradual approach. He suggested starting with low-stakes applications of AI, where the risk is minimal, and progressively moving towards higher-stakes scenarios.

He also called for greater collaboration between clinicians, regulators, and AI developers to ensure that AI systems are designed and deployed in ways that prioritise patient safety and improve clinical outcomes.

The presentation concluded on an optimistic note, with Dr Wright urging healthcare professionals not to fear AI but to take proactive steps to mitigate risks, such as establishing safeguards or "insurance" against potential failures. He advocated for using existing knowledge and frameworks to integrate AI into healthcare effectively, positioning it as a powerful enabler for improving healthcare delivery, rather than a replacement for human expertise.

In summary, Dr Wright's presentation encouraged a balanced and informed approach to AI in healthcare, underscoring the need for regulation, human-centred design, and collaboration to unlock AI's full potential while safeguarding patient safety.

PANEL DISCUSSION

MR THOMAS MALAMA | ZAMBIA ICT LEGAL EXPERT AND LECTURER

Mr Malama presented a detailed analysis of the potential risks, challenges, and necessary regulatory frameworks for using Artificial Intelligence in healthcare. He submitted that AI in healthcare poses several safety risks, such as misdiagnoses and treatment errors, which can impact multiple patients. He stressed the need for guiding policies and protocols to ensure patient safety.

Mr Malama pointed up the importance of data quality, noting that AI can only be effective if the data used for training is accurate and unbiased. Policies must be established to maintain data integrity and mitigate biases in AI-driven health practices. Malama also highlighted privacy concerns, as AI relies on vast amounts of data that can be vulnerable to breaches, making it essential to adhere to strict data security standards and patient consent regulations. One of the key concerns he addressed was the risk of automation bias, where healthcare providers might over-rely on AI without critically evaluating its recommendations. He emphasised the need for AI to enhance human efficiency, not replace human judgment. Additionally, Malama warned that AI might lead to the erosion of critical professional skills if practitioners overly depend on AI systems.

He further explained that cybersecurity threats and the fast pace of AI advancements present further regulatory challenges. He advocated for comprehensive governance frameworks that incorporate continuous monitoring, audits, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Mr Malama underscored the importance of involving stakeholders—such as patients, clinicians, and ethicists—in designing and implementing AI systems to ensure their acceptability and alignment with healthcare standards.
Lastly, he outlined ethical considerations, including the need for privacy protections and equitable access to AI-enhanced care, to avoid creating disparities in treatment outcomes. Continuous training for healthcare providers to understand and interpret AI outputs is critical to fostering trust and maintaining the quality of care in AI-driven healthcare.

DR DAVID MNZAVA | TANZANIA (PRESENTATION VIRTUALLY)

Dr Mnzava discussed the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in medical care, emphasizing both its potential benefits and associated risks. He explained that AI technologies, such as machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing, have the capacity to enhance healthcare by improving prevention and treatment. However, he warned that the use of AI carries significant safety risks, including the potential for misdiagnosis, treatment errors caused by flawed algorithms, data privacy breaches, and biases arising from unrepresentative training data.

Dr Mnzava highlighted the need for strong regulatory frameworks to address these risks. He pointed out that it is crucial to ensure data quality, protect patient privacy, reduce biases, and maintain the critical role of healthcare professionals alongside AI systems. He emphasised that practitioners should not rely entirely on AI but rather use it as a tool to augment their capabilities. Additionally, he called for continuous monitoring of AI systems, the implementation of clear governance structures, and the development of comprehensive policies to ensure AI is used safely and effectively in healthcare. He also stressed the importance of addressing ethical issues, such as safeguarding data privacy and ensuring equitable access to AI-enhanced healthcare.

DR ENEJO D ABDU | DEPUTY REGISTRAR OF THE MEDICAL AND DENTAL COUNCIL OF NIGERIA

Dr Abdu presented a compelling exploration of the regulatory landscape surrounding Artificial Intelligence and digital technologies in healthcare. He articulated that the swift adoption of AI, particularly in telehealth, necessitates a robust regulatory framework to ensure safety and quality standards. Notably, Nigeria has embraced telehealth since 2007, and its use surged during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the need for adaptive regulations.

Dr Abdu highlighted that while AI offers vast potential for enhancing medical practice, there are significant risks, including data privacy breaches, algorithmic biases, and the potential for misuse of digital tools. He underscored the importance of ensuring that AI complements human expertise rather than replacing it, particularly in clinical decision-making. The Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria's Telemedicine Practice in Nigeria Regulations 2022 provide a comprehensive legal structure, distinguishing between telehealth and telemedicine, with a clear mandate that only registered medical professionals may provide clinical services.

He further highlighted that these regulations safeguard patient privacy, enforce strict compliance with ethical standards, and mandate continuous monitoring of AI-driven systems to prevent adverse outcomes. Moreover, AI platforms are prohibited from directly prescribing medications or offering medical advice without human oversight. Dr Abdu called for international collaboration and the harmonisation of standards, highlighting that AI in healthcare is a permanent fixture but must be rigorously regulated to ensure it benefits both patients and healthcare providers responsibly. In conclusion, Dr Abdu envisioned a future where AI could revolutionise healthcare, but only if properly governed, with continuous stakeholder engagement and ethical oversight to prevent harm and foster trust in AI-powered medical interventions.

MR TEBOHO MOLISE | LESOTHO MEDICAL DENTAL AND PHARMACY COUNCIL

Mr Teboho Molise presented on the critical role of regulators in shaping the future of healthcare with a focus on ensuring quality and safety in AI-driven health practices. He described artificial intelligence as the capability of machines to perform cognitive tasks such as learning, decision-making, and problem-solving, which are increasingly being applied in medical settings like disease diagnosis, telemedicine, and electronic health records.

Molise emphasised the rapid advancements and adoption of AI in healthcare, which offer significant benefits but also raise important challenges, including algorithmic bias, lack of transparency, and data privacy concerns. He highlighted that AI-driven health practices require well-established regulatory frameworks to ensure safety and effectiveness, pointing out gaps in current regulations. To ensure quality standards, Mr Molise stressed the need for trusted data, accuracy, and efficacy in AI applications. He provided examples of successful regulatory interventions that have improved healthcare outcomes, such as addressing social risk factors and enhancing chronic disease management. Additionally, he discussed the risks associated with AI errors in healthcare and the strategies for mitigating these risks.

Mr Molise further called for collaboration among regulators, industry experts, and stakeholders to establish clear guidelines and standards for AI in healthcare. He also highlighted ethical considerations, such as fairness and inclusivity, and the need to ensure that AI does not replace human judgment but complements it. Finally, he advocated for international collaboration to harmonise standards and build global trust in AI-driven healthcare innovations, emphasising the importance of regulatory oversight in creating a safe, effective, and ethical future for AI in

healthcare.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND Q&A

During this session, various important regulatory questions were raised concerning the use of AI in healthcare. One question addressed how the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) regulates foreign practitioners who provide consultations online. The response indicated that the National Information and Technology Development Agency (NITDA) oversees social media platforms, allowing MDCN to block certain sites or apps as necessary. Another question focused on mitigating the risks of autonomous or unexplainable AI, particularly regarding accountability and accuracy. It was noted that manufacturers are not incentivised to make AI systems explainable, leaving the responsibility to regulators to ensure that these systems are controlled efficiently. There was also a discussion about the need for clarity in distinguishing between technologies and medical devices under current policies. Participants highlighted the importance of defining the role of regulators and identifying the entities they have legal authority to oversee. The need for collaboration between different regulatory bodies was emphasised to effectively manage the complexities of AI in healthcare

PLENARY SESSION 3: DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Session Chair: Ms Colleen King-McClintock

This session focused on the critical importance of enforcing strict protocols for data privacy and cybersecurity as AI becomes increasingly reliant on patient data. The discussion emphasised that while AI has the potential to transform healthcare by improving diagnostics, treatment, and efficiency, it also introduces significant risks to patient confidentiality. Regulators must establish robust privacy frameworks to prevent unauthorised access, data breaches, and the misuse of sensitive health information. The session highlighted the need for regulatory oversight to balance the benefits of AI with the protection of patient privacy, ensuring that trust in AI-driven healthcare solutions is maintained.

GUEST SPEAKER | MS MARA ZHANET MICHELO- FOUNDER & COUNTRY DIRECTOR AT JACARANDA HUB

Ms Mara Zhanet focused on the critical importance of safeguarding sensitive healthcare data in AI-enabled systems. She outlined the growing reliance on artificial intelligence technologies to enhance healthcare services, such as electronic health records (EHRs) and patient data management, while accenting the need for robust data protection mechanisms to prevent breaches and unauthorised access.

She highlighted that the healthcare sector is highly susceptible to data breaches, with significant financial repercussions. The average cost of a healthcare data breach is alarmingly high, surpassing other industries. Given this vulnerability, protecting different types of sensitive healthcare data—including Personal Identifiable Information (PII), Protected Health Information (PHI), research data, and financial records—has become paramount.

Her presentation outlined essential privacy and data protection practices for AI-enabled healthcare systems. She stressed the importance of data minimisation, encryption, and strict access controls to safeguard sensitive data. She further stressed the need for clear data sharing agreements, secure infrastructure, regular security audits, and compliance with international privacy regulations like GDPR and HIPAA.

A significant part of her discussion focused on the challenges in protecting electronic health records, with issues such as poor access controls and human error posing risks. Ms Mara advocated for continuous monitoring, regular audits, and training healthcare personnel on best practices in data privacy and security to address these challenges.

In conclusion, she underscored the importance of building a culture of privacy and security awareness. By implementing robust data protection measures and staying ahead of emerging threats, healthcare organisations can reduce the risk of data breaches, protect patient confidentiality, and maintain trust in AI-driven healthcare systems.

PANEL DISCUSSION

MR LIKANDO LUYWA | DATA PROTECTION COMMISSIONER, DATA PROTECTION COMMISSION OF ZAMBIA

Mr Likando explored the regulatory difficulties in managing artificial intelligence and its implications for health data security. He began by reflecting on past technological challenges, highlighting the evolution from slow internet speeds and limited data storage in the 1990s to the current landscape of fast, high-capacity data transfer. However, the presentation stressed that despite these advancements, modern health data security faces significant threats, such as phishing scams, ransomware, and denial-of-service (DoS) attacks.

A key focus was the complexity of AI in the healthcare sector. The interconnectivity of AI systems with various devices and applications, combined with the fast pace of AI technology evolution, makes effective regulation a challenge. Mr Likando also underscored the global nature of these systems, which introduces cross-border regulatory issues and further complicates data privacy and security. The presentation addressed the role of data protection acts in safeguarding health data, highlighting the need for a balance between innovation and public safety. AI's dependence on large datasets poses privacy risks, and public trust in AI must be maintained by ensuring proper data handling. He referenced the WHO's guiding principles, which stress the importance of patient consent, transparency, and privacy in AI-enabled healthcare systems.

While AI offers significant advantages, such as accelerating drug discovery, improving diagnostics, enhancing patient care, and automating routine tasks, Mr Likando highlighted the infancy of data protection acts in many African countries. He called for the adaptation of global data protection standards, such as the GDPR, and urged collaboration between healthcare providers and data protection authorities to develop effective regulations tailored for the African healthcare sector. In conclusion, he underlined that regulation alone cannot address all AI complexities, and that ongoing collaboration, innovation, and proactive security measures are essential to protect health data in the AI-driven healthcare environment.

DR DAVID KARIUKI | KENYA MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AND DENTISTS' COUNCIL - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, REGISTRAR

In his presentation, Dr- Kariuki, emphasised the increasing need for robust data privacy and security measures in healthcare, particularly as artificial intelligence becomes more integrated into patient care. With AI heavily reliant on vast amounts of patient data, the protection of sensitive health information is paramount. Dr Kariuki stressed that regulators, healthcare providers, and AI developers must work together to implement strict protocols that safeguard patient confidentiality and prevent unauthorised access.

He stated that in Kenya, the Data Protection Act 2019 mandates that data controllers and processors handle patient information lawfully, minimise unnecessary data collection, ensure data accuracy, and establish security safeguards. This is further supported by the Digital Health Act 2023, which outlines the appropriate use of digital technologies in healthcare.

Dr Kariuki outlined several key measures for enhancing data privacy and security in AI-driven healthcare. These include regulatory compliance frameworks to establish clear data handling policies, the use of data encryption to protect information during storage and transmission, and restricting access to authorised personnel using multi-factor authentication. He also gave emphasis to the importance of anonymising patient data through techniques like pseudonymisation to protect personal identities while still enabling valuable insights for healthcare improvements.

Furthermore, the presentation underscored the necessity of transparent consent processes, allowing patients to be fully informed about how their data will be used in AI systems. To prevent data breaches, Dr Kariuki recommended developing robust response plans, conducting regular security audits, and fostering collaboration between healthcare providers, AI developers, and cybersecurity experts. Additionally, educating both the public and professionals about the risks and benefits of AI in healthcare was highlighted as essential.

Ethical considerations were also addressed, with Dr Kariuki stressing the need for guidelines that protect patient rights and privacy, as well as ensuring the responsible use of AI in healthcare. He concluded by acknowledging AI's transformative potential but cautioned that a balance must be struck between allowing AI access to necessary data and protecting private health information. Continuous regulatory guidance will be crucial in managing the long-term implications of AI in healthcare delivery.

DR THAIM BUYA KAMARA | REGISTRAR, MEDICAL AND DENTAL COUNCIL OF SIERRA LEONE

Dr Kamara provided an overview of the council's establishment and functions. Formed by decree in 1994 and legally incorporated into Sierra Leone's laws in 1996, the council regulates and licenses medical practitioners, dental surgeons, and other healthcare providers, excluding nurses and pharmacists. It is also responsible for accrediting health facilities and overseeing medical training institutions until 2022.

Dr Kamara highlighted the legal framework on data protection and security in Sierra Leone, which includes key legislation such as the 1991 Constitution, the Right to Access Information Act (2013), the Cybersecurity and Crime Act (2021), the Right to Access Information Regulations, and the Sierra Leone National Innovation & Digital Strategy (2019–2029).

He noted the government's strong commitment to rolling out AI-driven programmes, as evidenced by the support of President Julius Maada Bio, who emphasised that science and technology are crucial for the country's development. However, several challenges impede progress in this area, including the vulnerability of paper-based data systems, weak infrastructure (such as unreliable power supply and internet), a limited pool of skilled human resources, and the high cost of establishing robust data security and privacy systems. Additionally, there remains skepticism about the capacity of AI to perform its intended functions effectively.

DR MAGOME MASIKE | REGISTRAR OF THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA

Dr. Magome examined the opportunities and challenges associated with integrating AI into healthcare, particularly within the African context. He began his presentation by identifying key healthcare challenges in Africa, including limited access to services, a shortage of healthcare professionals, financial obstacles, healthcare disparities, and supply chain issues. Dr. Masike raised

the question of whether AI could help address these challenges.

The presentation highlighted how AI can contribute to various facets of healthcare, such as clinical decision-making, diagnosis, and resource allocation. AI-driven systems can analyze patient data to offer evidence-based recommendations, thereby minimizing variability in clinical evaluations. Enhanced by AI, telemedicine platforms enable patients in underserved regions to consult specialists remotely, thereby improving access to healthcare services. Additionally, AI can bolster diagnostics by analyzing medical images and data, while predictive analytics can assist in managing disease outbreaks and optimizing healthcare resources. He discussed the broader implications of AI, including its potential to enhance patient safety, improve research outcomes, and speed up drug discovery. AI can help reduce medical errors, support complex surgeries, and improve patient outcomes through more effective data management. However, he emphasized that technology should not adversely affect vulnerable populations, and regulatory oversight is essential to ensure ethical and responsible AI integration in healthcare.

Dr. Magome also addressed the regulatory hurdles associated with AI adoption. He emphasized the need for regulators to balance innovation with the obligation to protect patient rights and privacy. He recommended that ethical guidelines be established to ensure responsible use of AI in healthcare. The rapid advancement of AI technology poses challenges for regulators, who must consistently update policies to keep up with developments. In conclusion, Dr. Magome advocated for collaboration among healthcare providers, AI developers, and regulators to establish a secure and ethical framework for AI in healthcare. He called for ongoing efforts to build trust in AI systems, stressing that while AI holds the potential to transform healthcare delivery in Africa and beyond, it must be accompanied by proper regulatory and ethical safeguards.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND Q&A

During this session, several significant concerns were raised about the integration of AI in healthcare. A key question focused on how health regulators can safeguard sensitive patient data when utilizing AI-driven technologies. The response underscored the necessity of implementing strong data encryption techniques, enforcing strict access controls, and using multi-factor authentication to prevent unauthorized access. Moreover, regulators were encouraged to establish transparent consent processes, ensuring that patients fully understand how their data will be utilized in AI systems.

Another topic addressed accountability in the event of AI-related errors or data security breaches. Panelists stressed the importance of clear regulatory frameworks that delineate the responsibilities of healthcare practitioners, AI developers, and institutions in the use of AI tools. Continuous monitoring of AI systems was also emphasized to ensure adherence to data privacy laws and to avoid biases or inaccuracies.

Audience contributions highlighted the critical need for collaboration among regulatory bodies, AI developers, and healthcare providers to tackle the evolving challenges presented by AI in healthcare. Several participants advocated for the creation of cross-border data privacy

regulations, considering the global nature of AI systems, to ensure uniform protection of patient data across various regions. Finally, the necessity for ongoing education and training for healthcare practitioners to effectively manage AI systems and mitigate potential risks was widely recognized.

PLENARY SESSION 4: ETHICAL LEGAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Session Chair: Dr Claire Karekezi

The session focused on the need for regulators to establish clear ethical guidelines and legal and technological frameworks for the responsible development and deployment of AI in healthcare. This includes addressing issues such as algorithmic bias, patient consent, and liability for AI-driven decisions.

GUEST SPEAKER | DR HUMAYUN CHAUDHRY-FEDERATION OF STATE MEDICAL BOARDS

Dr Chaudhry focused on the intersection of AI and healthcare, addressing the ethical, regulatory, and technological challenges posed by AI adoption in medical practice. Dr Chaudhry highlighted the growing influence of AI technologies, such as large language models like ChatGPT, and the implications these technologies have on healthcare delivery.

The presentation emphasised the need for clear ethical guidelines, referencing the Belmont Report's principles of beneficence, respect for persons, and justice, which apply not only to clinical research but also to AI's use in patient care. Dr Chaudhry explored the skepticism surrounding the long-term value of AI, with some experts questioning whether the financial investment in AI will yield returns, while others see significant potential. He conveyed that AI will not replace physicians but will enhance the capabilities of those who use it. He stressed the importance of regulatory bodies like the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) in overseeing the safe and ethical use of AI in healthcare. He outlined FSMB's policy recommendations across seven key areas: transparency, education, responsible use, equity, privacy, regulation, and continual review of AI laws.

Dr Chaudhry also addressed concerns about algorithmic bias and the need to ensure equitable access to AI technologies. He stressed that regulators must establish safeguards to protect patient data and uphold accountability in cases of inappropriate AI use. He further noted that physicians must be prepared to explain and justify decisions based on AI recommendations, ensuring transparency and patient safety. In conclusion, Dr Chaudhry called for continued collaboration between healthcare providers, AI developers, and regulators to foster an environment where AI is used responsibly, ethically, and effectively to improve patient outcomes and healthcare delivery.

PANEL DISCUSSION

MS BANJI MICHELO NYUNDO | ZAMBIA LEGAL ADVISOR SPECIALISING IN CORPORATE AND ICT LAW

Ms Nyundo's presentation focused on the ethical, legal, and technological frameworks surrounding Artificial Intelligence (AI), which she defined as technology that enables machines to simulate human intelligence and problem-solving abilities. She highlighted several international regulatory frameworks, including the AU White Paper on AI, OECD Guidelines, ITU's AI for Good initiative, and the EU AI Act, emphasising their relevance to Zambia's efforts in developing AI

regulations. Ms Nyundo expressed concerns about the impact of AI on health workers and privacy, noting that Zambia's National ICT Policy of 2023 and the Data Protection Act of 2021 address some aspects of these challenges. However, she pointed out that Zambia still lacks a specific legal framework for AI, though the Ministry of Science and Technology is working on an AI strategy. Ms Nyundo called for the creation of an adaptive legal and regulatory framework for AI that includes algorithmic transparency, audibility, and accountability, along with clear guidelines on liability between AI developers and service providers. She emphasised the importance of enhancing compliance and enforcement mechanisms for existing legislation, developing guidelines to avoid biases in large datasets, and implementing regulatory sandboxes. Moreover, she stressed the need for public education on data protection to ensure that AI is used responsibly. In conclusion, Ms Nyundo urged the development of AI regulations in Zambia that would promote innovation without stifling progress, while ensuring responsible use. Citing the "Peter Parker Principle"—with great power comes great responsibility—she pointed out the need for all stakeholders to embrace AI responsibly, acknowledging that it is an inevitable part of the future.

ADV. MICHAEL ONYANGO | KENYA, CORP SEC, KMPDC, AMCOA LEGAL COUNSEL

Adv. Onyango delivered a presentation emphasising the intersection of AI, ethics, and law in healthcare. He began by showing delegates a Netflix video that explored the extent to which AI can collect and process data about individuals, underscoring the importance of understanding the implications of our personal data being integrated into AI systems. Onyango emphasised the necessity of preserving ethical principles, such as beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, and justice, even as AI is increasingly adopted in healthcare. He also addressed the legal aspects tied to AI, including duty of care, standards of care, informed consent, confidentiality, and continuity of care. These principles are crucial in ensuring that AI applications in healthcare does not compromise patient rights and safety. On the technological side, Onyango discussed the complexity of AI, covering topics such as algorithms, machine learning, and big data, to provide a basic understanding of how AI operates. In conclusion, he issued a call to action, urging delegates not to be overwhelmed by the technological complexities of AI but to remain steadfast in upholding ethical principles in its application within healthcare.

DR DIVINE BANYUBALA | GHANA - REGISTRAR OF THE MEDICAL AND DENTAL COUNCIL GHANA

Dr Banyubala presented on the ethics and regulation of AI in healthcare. With expertise in Bioethics and Medical Jurisprudence, he discussed the ethical concerns AI raises in health administration, care delivery, and medical training. Key issues include threats to human autonomy, data ownership, care without informed consent, discrimination, and disinformation. He emphasised the need for robust regulatory frameworks, including quality assurance, safety standards, and the credentialing of AI providers to protect the public. Dr Banyubala called for AI to be anchored in human-centred values, enhancing rather than replacing human capabilities, and ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability. He highlighted the importance of data ownership, referencing Ghana's constitutional efforts to improve access to health data. In conclusion, he urged AMCOA to lead in AI regulation within Africa, emphasising the continent's communitarian values and the urgency of collective action.

DR IFEANYI OFUNNE | CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER IN NAMIBIA

Dr Ofunnee presented virtually on the principal approach to AI in healthcare. Despite initial technological challenges, he successfully delivered his presentation, emphasising the rapid

financial growth in the AI sector—from $11 billion in 2021 to a projected $188 billion by 2025—and warning that the influx of money could potentially drive agendas that may not align with patient care priorities. He outlined key problems associated with AI, including high implementation costs, data privacy and security concerns, algorithmic biases, and the lack of standardisation. Dr Ofunne raised several critical issues, such as the risks of biased data, errors, and "hallucinations" in AI, as well as safety concerns and governance gaps. He questioned whether AI is truly improving healthcare efficiency or simply following trends. He also touched on the ethical dilemmas of AI ownership, liability in malpractice, and the impact of AI on medical education and practice. Dr Ofunne concluded by stressing the importance of protecting patients and adhering to the principle of "do no harm" as AI continues to permeate the healthcare sector, often without sufficient regulation.

MS JOAN SIMEON – CHAIR INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL REGULATORY AUTHORITIES (IAMRA)

Ms Simeon, discussed the crucial role of medical regulators in ensuring the ethical integration of AI in healthcare. With over 20 years of experience in medical regulation, she highlighted both the benefits of AI, such as improved efficiency and support for medical professionals, and the significant challenges it poses, including privacy concerns, data protection issues, and biases in AI systems. She drew attention to the importance of accountability, transparency, and informed consent, stressing that patients must be fully informed when AI is involved in their care, allowing them to make informed decisions. She concluded by recommending a focus on five key areas: accountability, trust, risk management, equity, and understanding AI's limitations. She reiterated that AI should complement, not replace, the expertise of healthcare professionals. Additionally, she announced the upcoming 16th International Conference on Medical Regulation, which will be held in Dublin in September 2025, where these important issues will be further explored.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND Q&A

During this session, several key issues surrounding the deployment of AI in healthcare were raised. One attendee inquired whether adequate risk-based analytics are conducted before AI is implemented in healthcare systems. The response emphasised the importance of prioritising such analytics to ensure AI systems are thoroughly evaluated, particularly before involving human subjects. Another question addressed how regulators can effectively consider patient perspectives and prevent the misuse of AI. The response highlighted the need for AI to be patient-centred, with patients being fully informed and educated about AI use. Proper consent and thorough documentation were deemed essential to prevent misuse. A further inquiry focused on how to regulate AI without overregulating and stifling innovation. The answer suggested that clear standards should be set, coupled with ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Addressing misconduct efficiently was also key to balancing regulation with innovation. Finally, when asked who bears responsibility in a multidisciplinary team using AI, the response stressed that accountability should be clearly defined in guidelines, with responsibility distributed based on specific circumstances.

PLENARY SESSION 5: CONTINUAL MONITORING AND ADAPTATION

Session Chair: Dr Chipo Muyovwe

Given a rapid pace of technological advancement, the session focussed on the need for regulatory frameworks to be flexible and adaptable to keep pace with evolving AI capabilities and emerging challenges in healthcare.

GUEST SPEAKER | MR CHOOLWE ANDREW NALUBAMBA DIRECTOR GENERAL, ZAMBIA INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY

Mr Nalubamba delved into the pressing need for strong regulatory frameworks as AI becomes increasingly integrated into healthcare systems. He began by asserting that AI is no longer a distant prospect but a transformative technology shaping the future of healthcare today. While AI offers immense potential for improving healthcare delivery, it also brings significant challenges that require careful oversight. One of the primary challenges highlighted was the knowledge gap and ethical concerns surrounding AI. Healthcare providers and regulators must address these gaps to ensure that AI is used safely and responsibly.

Mr Nalubamba pointed to the limited resources and infrastructure in many regions, which could hinder the equitable deployment of AI. Additionally, the presentation acknowledged the potential threat of job displacement due to AI automation and the difficulty in striking a balance between fostering innovation and enforcing necessary regulations. AI's accuracy, reliability, and the risk of algorithmic bias were other concerns raised, as well as the question of data localisation—who controls the storage, processing, and access to vast amounts of medical data. The presentation posed critical questions, such as who should be responsible for managing and providing access to medical big data, whether medical doctors should be allowed to practise telemedicine beyond their local jurisdictions, and how AI will impact sectors like the insurance industry.

Further, he stated that regulatory compliance models are vital to ensure that AI enhances healthcare in an accessible, safe, affordable, and effective way. This includes the need to protect patient rights and ensure the ethical development and deployment of AI systems, as well as the standardisation of AI practices and protocols. The recommendations proposed in the presentation included ongoing dialogue with ICT regulators to ensure that AI policies remain relevant and adaptive to technological advances. Mr Nalubamba also underscored the critical role that medical councils must play in guiding AI integration into healthcare, with responsibilities that include oversight, ensuring compliance, and safeguarding ethical practices. Continuous review and adaptation of AI regulations were also highlighted as necessary to keep pace with the rapid evolution of AI technologies.

In conclusion, Mr Nalubamba issued a call to action for the Association of Medical Councils of Africa to take a proactive role in shaping the regulatory landscape for AI in healthcare. With the right regulations in place, AI holds the promise of significantly improving healthcare outcomes, ensuring that the technology benefits both healthcare providers and patients without compromising safety or ethical standards.

PANEL DISCUSSION

DR STEPHANIE KUKU, MD – CHIEF KNOWLEDGE OFFICER, CONCEIVABLE LIFE SCIENCES

Dr Kuku who presented virtually discussed the evolution of AI in regulatory settings, focusing on the challenges posed by US regulatory sanction documents, which vary in quality, length, and format. She gave prominence to the need for standardisation in data points such as names, license numbers, and disciplinary actions. Dr Kuku highlighted the difficulties encountered in AI model performance, with varying success rates across Bayesian models, FastText, and neural networks. She also noted technological advancements, particularly in Optical Character Recognition (OCR), that have improved AI capabilities, from simple tests to sophisticated digital assistance. Dr Kuku shared a proof of concept demonstrating AI's progress through a series of experiments and outlined future directions for AI in regulatory sanctions, including advanced OCR and natural language processing. She concluded by stressing the importance of responsible AI development and effective information extraction from complex content.

DR GRACE CHIUDZU – VICE CHAIRPERSON OF MEDICAL COUNCIL OF MALAWI

Dr Chiudzu highlighted the significant role of AI in healthcare, particularly in diagnostics, treatment, and system optimisation. She acknowledged the challenges AI faces, such as data quality, ethical concerns, and acceptance within the healthcare community. To address these issues, she stressed the importance of continuous monitoring, training, and adaptation. An example she provided was the use of AI to optimise health systems by digitising patient data, which has significantly improved data coverage and efficiency in programmes for malaria, HIV, and TB. Continuous AI monitoring, as discussed by Dr Chiudzu, is crucial for ensuring that AI systems function correctly and adapt to new data. This ongoing oversight helps maintain high standards in areas such as data quality, model performance, ethical and legal compliance, interoperability, and regulatory adherence. Additionally, monitoring factors like scalability, economic feasibility, and fairness is essential to ensure that AI systems deliver equitable outcomes and remain cost-effective. In conclusion, Dr Chiudzu recommended that healthcare institutions implementing AI should engage in continuous monitoring and adaptation. This process allows AI systems to learn from feedback, detect drifts, and make necessary adjustments to improve their performance and reliability over time, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of AI in healthcare.

MS CYNDI STREUN FSMB – VICE PRESIDENT, INFORMATION SERVICES-FEDERATION OF STATE MEDICAL BOARDS

Ms Cyndi Streun presented that FSMB has long managed regulatory sanction documents, which often vary in format, quality, and length. Standardising the extraction of key information such as respondent names, license numbers, and disciplinary actions from these documents has been a significant challenge. In 2018, FSMB explored the use of AI technologies, including Bayesian models, FastText, and Neural Networks, to classify regulatory sanctions. However, these models faced considerable challenges, achieving only moderate accuracy rates. Technological advancements, particularly in Optical Character Recognition (OCR), have since improved the ability to extract data from these complex documents. Contributions from various participants have further enhanced AI capabilities, leading to more sophisticated digital assistants and better handling of regulatory information. Proof-of-concept experiments have demonstrated the progression from basic OCR to advanced natural language processing, showing the potential for AI to manage more complex regulatory tasks in the future. Looking ahead, FSMB plans to incorporate advanced OCR techniques and build multiple AI models to improve the accuracy and efficiency of regulatory sanction management. The focus will be on developing AI systems

capable of extracting information from highly variable content using large foundation models. Throughout this process, FSMB is committed to the responsible use of AI, ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability, particularly in handling sensitive regulatory data

DR KISUULE IVAN – UGANDA ACTING REGISTRAR OF THE UGANDA MEDICAL AND DENTAL PRACTITIONERS' COUNCIL

Dr Kisuule Ivan's presentation focused on the regulatory framework for telehealth, telemedicine, and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare in Uganda. He highlighted the UMDPC's efforts to update guidelines to include telemedicine, requiring providers to obtain specific licenses and maintain the same standards of care as in-person consultations. Dr Kisuule emphasised the importance of securing patient information through technologies like electronic health records (EHR) and ensuring that telemedicine encounters adhere to Good Medical Practice guidelines. Additionally, he addressed the need for continuous monitoring and adaptation of AI in healthcare, stressing the importance of ethical considerations, accountability, and patient protection. Overall, the presentation called for updating regulatory frameworks to keep pace with technological advancements, ensuring that telehealth, telemedicine, and AI enhance the quality of healthcare services.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND Q&A

During the Q&A session, the discussion focused on balancing the integration of AI in healthcare with the safety concerns it raises. The panellists acknowledged that regulation is challenging, as there is a natural tendency to resist or over-regulate. They emphasised the importance of identifying risks and ensuring consumer protection, particularly in private services driven by business interests, where a balance between public good and safety must be maintained. Data security was highlighted as a critical issue in the context of AI, with privacy and confidentiality needing stringent safeguards.

The panellists advocated for a multi-disciplinary approach to AI regulation, ensuring that technology serves as a tool rather than replacing practitioners. On the topic of accountability, it was agreed that ultimate responsibility should lie with the primary practitioner, especially when consulting across borders, and this should be clearly outlined in regulations to avoid ambiguity.

PLENARY SESSION 6: UNDERSTANDING AI'S IMPACT

Session Chair: Dr Mary Zulu

This session was the highlight for all attendees, it provided crucial insights into the future of regulation of healthcare and its relationship with AI, the panel was constituted with key role players in the various regional blocs.

PANEL DISCUSSION

PROF. MULINDI MWANAHAMUNTU – ZAMBIA

Prof. Mulindi Mwanahamuntu, Chairman of the Health Professions Council of Zambia, addressed the challenge of maintaining high standards of practice in an AI-driven healthcare environment. He posed a critical question: Should AI adapt to existing medical practices, or should practitioners adapt their practices to accommodate AI? Prof. Mwanahamuntu argued that, ultimately, it is the responsibility of healthcare professionals to adapt, as they are the ones developing, choosing, and deploying AI technologies.

He highlighted the need to prioritise safety, particularly in interventional medicine, where AI's role must be carefully managed to ensure it enhances rather than compromises patient care. Prof. Mwanahamuntu highlighted the necessity of embracing AI while also exercising control over its implementation. He reminded the audience that regulators must be proactive in adapting to AI to ensure the safety and well-being of patients. This involves not only setting standards for AI use but also continually reviewing and updating these standards to reflect the latest advancements in technology. By doing so, healthcare systems can harness the benefits of AI while minimising risks, ensuring that AI-driven innovations contribute positively to the goal of providing equitable and high-quality healthcare services in Zambia.

PROF. JOEL OKULLO – UGANDA

Prof. Joel Okullo opened the discussion by exploring the transformative potential of AI in healthcare. He posed a thought-provoking question about the role we will play in the AI revolution: Will we take an active role in steering its development, or will we passively follow its lead? Prof. Okullo accentuated that AI is a powerful tool poised to reshape the industry, and it is crucial for healthcare professionals to have a foundational understanding of its operations. This knowledge will enable practitioners to harness AI's potential effectively while ensuring that its use aligns with clinical and ethical standards.

Prof. Okullo further stressed the importance of regulatory frameworks in managing AI's integration into healthcare. However, he warned against over-regulation, pointing out that AI's rapid evolution requires a flexible approach that can adapt to new developments. He likened the responsibility of healthcare practitioners in the AI era to the biblical story of Adam, emphasising that practitioners, not AI, will be held accountable for patient outcomes. This analogy underscores the importance of maintaining human oversight and responsibility in AI-driven healthcare, ensuring that technology serves as an aid rather than a replacement for professional judgment.

PROF. STANLEY KHAINGA – KENYA

Prof. Stanley Khainga, the Chairman of the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council, highlighted the economic potential of AI, projecting it to become a $3 billion industry within the next three years. He pointed out that while AI presents a significant market opportunity, Africa must actively engage in this technological revolution to secure its share of the benefits. Prof. Khainga emphasised the importance of educating patients about AI, particularly in how it will be used in their diagnosis and treatment. He stressed that informed consent is critical, and patients need to understand that AI tools are increasingly being used alongside healthcare professionals to improve diagnostic accuracy and treatment outcomes.

In addition to patient education, Prof. Khainga underscored the need for robust data security measures to protect sensitive patient information from hacking and data loss. As AI becomes more integrated into healthcare systems, ensuring data privacy and security will be paramount. He called for continued investment in AI technologies, coupled with the development of regulations that keep pace with these advancements. While AI should be embraced for its potential to revolutionise healthcare, Prof. Khainga cautioned that it must be carefully regulated to ensure that its use enhances, rather than undermines, patient safety and trust in healthcare systems.

DR MAGOME MASIKE - SOUTH AFRICA

Dr Magome Masike, Registrar of the Health Professions Council of South Africa, focused on the ethical and legal responsibilities of healthcare professionals in the AI era. He stressed the importance of maintaining the duty of care, standard of care, and informed consent, ensuring that patients remain at the centre of healthcare practices. Dr Masike highlighted the need for continuity of care, where AI should complement, not replace, the expertise of healthcare providers. He also stressed the importance of data privacy and the ethical use of AI algorithms, ensuring that these technologies are transparent, accountable, and used in a way that fosters trust between patients and healthcare providers.

Dr Masike further elaborated on the core ethical principles that must guide the use of AI in healthcare, including beneficence, accountability, trust, and transparency. He reminded the audience that while AI can significantly enhance healthcare delivery, it is crucial that these technologies are used responsibly and ethically. Healthcare must remain patient-centred, with AI serving as a tool to support, rather than dictate, clinical decisions. By adhering to these principles, healthcare systems can ensure that AI contributes positively to patient outcomes while upholding the highest standards of care and ethical practice.

DR AUGUSTUS GARLET QUIAH – LIBERIA

Dr Augustus Garlet Quiah, representing Liberia, provided a comprehensive overview of how regulators in Africa should approach AI, describing it as a rapidly evolving and complex technology. He emphasised the importance of continuous monitoring and adaptation to ensure that AI systems remain effective and safe over time. Dr Quiah discussed the need for robust risk management frameworks, including regular data surveillance, risk containment, and the ability to foresee and address potential issues before they arise. By continuously evaluating AI systems, healthcare providers can ensure that these technologies enhance patient care without introducing new risks. Dr Quiah also addressed the need for a clear understanding of what AI can and should achieve in the healthcare sector. He called on regulators to define the specific roles AI should play, whether in data analysis, decision-making, policy formulation, or mid-term reviews.

This clarity will help ensure that AI is used effectively and ethically, contributing to better health outcomes across Africa. Dr Quiah concluded by emphasising the importance of collaboration among regulators, healthcare providers, and AI developers to create a healthcare environment where AI enhances, rather than complicates, the delivery of high-quality care.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND Q&A

During this session, several key points were raised about the integration of AI in healthcare.

Dr D Yumbya emphasised the importance of incorporating AI into the training of doctors and healthcare workers, suggesting that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes and institutions like UTH should be involved in the process.

Dr Kgosi Letlape from South Africa raised concerns about the impact of paranoia on AI adoption and the difficulty of obtaining informed consent when practitioners themselves are unsure about AI. He stressed the need for a common health information system and for those trained to fully embrace AI, while also considering the socio-economic realities of their communities.

Dr Asanda highlighted the need for Africa to develop its own AI systems using local data to ensure better clinical outcomes, rather than relying on tools developed elsewhere.

A question addressed the issue of AI regulation, to which Dr Masike responded by explaining the different models of regulation and the importance of adapting them to specific contexts.

Overall, the discussion underscored the need for tailored training, careful consideration of local contexts, and robust regulatory frameworks to effectively integrate AI into healthcare in Africa.

8. CLOSING CEREMONY

Session Chair: Adv. Esther Mutheu

A. CLOSING ADDRESS

The conference ended with an address by the **Permanent Secretary Technical Services, Dr Kennedy Lishimpi** as well as the **Hon. Dr Margaret Muhanga Mugisa, the State Minister of Health, Uganda**.

Dr Lishimpi delivered the address on behalf of the Minister of Health for Zambia, acknowledging the presence of the Minister of Health from Uganda and extending greetings from the Zambian Minister, who had returned to Lusaka for other pressing engagements.

Dr Lishimpi highlighted the significance of the conference, noting the attendance of four cabinet ministers, which underscores the importance of AI in healthcare. He emphasised the need for quality assurance in AI medical systems to build robust healthcare infrastructure and called for the development of African biobanks and homegrown, Africa-centred solutions. As an example, he mentioned Tanzania's success in geo-coding residents and transport providers into a national GPS system, which facilitates rapid assignment of vehicles for emergency transport of pregnant women to health facilities.

Dr Lishimpi spoke about AI's potential to enhance diagnostics, healthcare delivery, and training but stressed the importance of adhering to ethical principles, ensuring accountability, and protecting patients. He reminded the audience that while AI is a valuable tool, it should not replace human practitioners but rather assist them, with professionals validating AI projections. He also emphasised the need to educate the public as AI is introduced into healthcare and to update regulations to address new challenges arising from AI use.

Hon. Dr Margaret Muhanga Mugisa, the State Minister of Health, Uganda closed the session by stating that Africa's population is predominantly young, with a significant portion under the age of 35, belonging to Generation Z. This tech-savvy generation has grown up in a digital world where access to information and technology is second nature. As they become more educated and informed, their expectations for services, including healthcare, are increasingly aligned with technological advancements.

In response, the healthcare sector in Africa must evolve to meet these expectations by embracing technology-based solutions, including artificial intelligence (AI). AI has the potential to revolutionise healthcare by improving diagnosis, treatment, and overall health management. It can address critical challenges such as the shortage of medical professionals and the need for more efficient data management, ultimately enhancing the quality and accessibility of care.
The future of healthcare in Africa depends on our ability to integrate these technologies effectively. By doing so, we not only meet the current needs of our young population but also position ourselves as leaders in global health innovation. It is essential that we adopt these advancements thoughtfully, ensuring they enhance, rather than replace, the human touch that remains central to healthcare.

B. VOTE OF THANKS

AMCOA | DR WILSON BENJAMIN (VICE PRESIDENT)

Dr. Wilson Benjamin reflected on the productive and rewarding interactions that took place over the past few days, emphasizing that the success of the event was largely due to the enthusiastic participation of all attendees. On behalf of AMCOA, he sincerely thanked all speakers and delegates who contributed to the conference.

He offered special recognition to the Guest of Honour, Health Minister Dr. Elijah Julaki Muchima, for his invaluable support of the conference. Dr. Benjamin also expressed gratitude towards AMCOA President, Prof. Joel Okullo, the AMCOA Management Committee, and the Chairperson of the Health Profession Council of Zambia, Prof. Mulindi Mwanahamuntu, for their guidance and assistance. He acknowledged the speakers for their insightful and valuable presentations and highlighted the crucial role of sponsors in ensuring the event's success, noting that their contributions were essential.

Dr. Benjamin also recognized the media for their coverage of the event and emphasized the importance of sharing the discussions and ideas presented with the public, health practitioners, opinion leaders, and other stakeholders. He commended the efforts of the organizers, including the Health Professions Council of Zambia, the Organizing Committee, and the AMCOA Secretariat, for their thorough planning and execution of the event.

In closing, Dr. Benjamin expressed his appreciation to the Government of Zambia and the staff at Avani Resort for their outstanding hospitality.

HPCZ | PROF. FASTONE GOMA REGISTRAR

Prof. Fastone Goma conveyed heartfelt thanks on behalf of the Health Professions Council of Zambia for the event's success. He specifically recognized the Ministers of Health from Zambia and Uganda, along with the Minister of Southern Province and the Minister of Tourism, appreciating their participation as a significant commitment to the conference, which impressively attracted four ministers.

He expressed gratitude to all presenters for their valuable insights, emphasizing that the knowledge shared would have a lasting impact on healthcare regulation across the continent. He extended special appreciation to the esteemed delegates who travelled from various regions of Zambia, Africa, and beyond; their enthusiastic involvement and collaborative spirit were crucial to the event's achievements. He also acknowledged the sponsors for their vital support in making the conference possible and recognized the hard work of the organizing committees and behind-the-scenes staff, who ensured the event's seamless planning and execution.

Furthermore, he thanked the AMCOA Management Committee (MANCO) for allowing the Health Professions Council of Zambia to host the conference, which enabled the Council to contribute meaningfully to AMCOA's goals and the advancement of healthcare regulation. As the conference wrapped up, Prof. Goma encouraged everyone to take the knowledge, connections, and inspiration gained forward, striving for excellence in healthcare regulation. He wished all participants safe travels and expressed hope for future opportunities to continue this essential work.

9. CONFERENCE STATEMENT

The conference concluded with the drafting of the AMCOA Conference Statement, a landmark document outlining the collective vision and strategic steps necessary to harmonize AI regulation across Africa. This declaration underscored the commitment of all participating councils to work together in ensuring that AI technologies contribute positively to the health and well-being of all African citizens.

The AMCOA Legal Counsel, Adv. Ntsikelelo Sipeka (South Africa) affirmed the urgent need to re-align regulatory priorities towards facilitating and preparing for the appropriate use of technology, inclusive of, Artificial Intelligence (AI) as an enabler. There was consensus that –

- There was a need to develop guidelines and procedures for regulating use of AI in healthcare;
- There was a need to ensure that AI technologies are developed and deployed in a manner that upholds safety, efficacy, privacy, and ethical standards; and
- There was a need to standardise the regulation of the use of AI in healthcare to create a unified framework that ensures consistency, safety, and effectiveness across all.

It was further agreed that whilst member councils/boards of AMCOA take various forms both in structure and content, the member states should pursue processes of aligning or developing legislative and other policy frameworks to facilitate the implementation of the following principles, where applicable, namely–

Training and Research
Regulators to ensure that all healthcare professionals receive foundational education on AI technologies. This be supported by the development of comprehensive training programmes covering theoretical and practical aspects of AI in healthcare.

Safety and Efficacy
All AI systems intended for use in healthcare shall undergo rigorous validation procedures to ensure they meet safety and efficacy standards.

Data Privacy and Security
Ensure that AI systems comply with applicable data protection laws, regulations and policies to safeguard patient information and that data handling practices protect patient privacy and rights.

Ethical Considerations
AI systems shall be designed to minimise and address biases to prevent discriminatory outcomes.
AI systems shall support, rather than replace, patient decision-making. Member states commit to ensure that AI systems provide patients with relevant information and options, ensuring that they retain control over their healthcare choices.

Risk Management
Risk management plans shall be developed to mitigate identified risks and ensure safe operation.

As delegates departed, there was a palpable sense of optimism and determination to meet the challenges head-on and harness the full potential of AI in transforming healthcare on the continent.

The 26th Annual Conference of the Association of Medical Councils of Africa not only highlighted the urgent need for regulatory evolution but also inspired a collaborative spirit aimed at creating a healthier future for all.

10. ADJACENT MEETINGS

AMCOA WORKSHOP: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AMCOA MCCOD PROTOCOL

Country Experiences Implementation of Medical Certification of Cause of Death as Part of Good Clinical Practice in Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, And Tanzania

Medical certification of cause of death (MCCOD) is a crucial step in documenting causes of death that are coded according to agreed international standards. Inaccurate assignment of the underlying cause of death compromises the utility of health facility data and the trust of policymakers. Despite the availability of international standards by WHO, guidelines and training materials for physicians in how to correctly certify deaths, the quality of mortality data is still low in many countries in Africa. To address this challenge, countries have taken different ad-hoc approaches that must be harmonised. As a result, the Association of Medical Councils in Africa (AMCOA) adopted the medical certification protocol for cause of death. The objective of this workshop was to show how various member states have implemented different components of the AMCOA protocol to build a scaled and sustainable system to collect high-quality medically certified cause of death data. Four countries, Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Tanzania will share their learning on implementing this AMCOA protocol and the impact it has created in addressing the challenge of good certification of medical cause of death as part of good clinical practice.

OPENING REMARKS | DR AFRIKA GUIDO GASANA –CHAIRPERSON, RWANDA DENTAL AND MEDICAL COUNCIL

Dr Gasana presented the protocol on medical certification of cause of death (MCCD), highlighting the significant gaps in death registration, particularly in Africa, where 40% of deaths go unregistered, and 90% of reported deaths in low and middle-income countries lack an assigned cause (WHO 2024). He emphasised the importance of high-quality mortality data for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which require 80% of all deaths to be registered with their causes. The World Health Organization (WHO) provides guidelines for MCCD forms, and AMCOA has endorsed this protocol.

Dr Gasana discussed the pillars of the MCCD protocol, which include coordination and governance, capacity building, quality assurance, and data analysis. He outlined the implementation framework, which interlinks government, practice, training, and process interventions.

COUNTRY EXPERIENCES

RWANDA| DR ANABELLE KAYIRANGWA

The First Country to Implement the MCCD Protocol. Dr Kayirangwa discussed Rwanda's approach to improving medical certification practices. The Ministry of Health issued mandatory instructions to adopt MCCD and ICD coding tools, established mortality committees at the hospital level, and developed an MCCOD e-learning course. Notably, 95% of in-service practitioners have completed this course as part of their CPD requirements for license renewal.
Rwanda integrated MCCOD into civil registration systems, leading to a significant increase in death registration from 4% in 2017 to 42% in 2023. Additionally, 98% of hospital deaths are now recorded with a clear cause in the CRVS system. Dr Kayirangwa emphasised the importance of political commitment in achieving these milestones.

TANZANIA | MS REMLA MRAMBA

Second Country to Adopt the MCCD Protocol. Tanzania undertook a pre-implementation baseline assessment and upgraded its curriculum to include MCCD content. Both pre-service and in-service training were conducted to familiarise health practitioners with the new protocol. Since the implementation, the accuracy of certification has improved significantly, with 95% of certifications done correctly from 2019 to 2023, compared to 65% in 2017.

ETHIOPIA | MS. TIGIST MEKONNEN

Third Country to Implement the MCCD Protocol. Ethiopia focused on capacity building through pre-service and in-service training programmes, conducting training needs assessments, and updating the curriculum to include MCCD. An e-learning CPD programme was also developed. Collaboration with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, was crucial. As of now, 94.8% of total deaths are coded with ICD-11. Key lessons learned include the importance of stakeholder engagement and adopting cost-effective training protocols.

KENYA | DR DAVID KARIUKI

Kenya was the fourth country to implement the MCCD protocol. The country conducted a baseline assessment and trained champions, including pathologists and deans. MCCD was incorporated into the undergraduate curriculum, and an in-service e-learning CPD course was developed. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are ongoing. Progress includes training 60 champions and integrating MCCOD into the curricula for MBChB programmes.

ZAMBIA| STRENGTHENING MCCOD BY INTEGRATING MEDICAL LEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATION

Zambia's Approach to MCCD Implementation. Dr Muchelenganga discussed Zambia's challenges, noting that a 2016 study showed 52% of deaths occurred in the community, with 48% in health facilities. This has since balanced to 50% each. However, 50% of deaths still go unaccounted for. He emphasised the importance of interpreting MCCD in community deaths and introduced WHO guidelines for distinguishing between natural and unnatural deaths. The goal is to ensure all deaths are registered and coded correctly using MCCDs.

OUTCOMES

An issue was raised about doctors continuing to engage in incorrect practices despite training. The response emphasised the need to strengthen quality assurance at the facility level and improve governance around the certification of the cause of death to ensure adherence to proper protocols.

A query was raised about whether the CPD programme for death certification is exclusively for hospital-based professionals or if it also includes those in other institutions where death certification is not typically part of their duties. The response clarified that the CPD is mandatory for all doctors, as they may all be required to perform this task at some point in their careers. Another question addressed the challenge of certifying deaths attributed to witchcraft and the type of team necessary for such cases. The response highlighted that, in Zambia, the law mandates that any community death be reported to the headman, chief, coroner, or police, ensuring proper oversight and investigation.

In closing, countries were encouraged to adopt the WHO ICD-10 2016 version of the International Medical Certificate of Death and adhere to AMCOA protocol for good practice in Medical Certification of Cause of Death reporting. Getting to scale and sustainability for high-quality medical certification of cause of death would involve collaboration of the following components of health system strengthening 1) National Governance structures, 2) Routine quality checks, 3) Capacity building, and 4) Compliance measures.

11. AMCOA COMMITTEES

The AMCOA committees initiated a review of their operational plans and terms of reference, concentrating on these key areas:

- Aligning committee activities and plans with AMCOA's vision, mission, and strategic objectives, along with outlining key performance areas and deliverables.

- Assessing the committees' capacity to implement a new strategy, including evaluating human and financial resources.

12. REGIONAL BLOC WORKSHOPS

The discussions within the regional bloc provided attendees with an opportunity to connect in an environment that encourages interdisciplinary interactions and promotes collaborations after the conference.

The regional bloc workshops focused on encouraging initiative-driven coordination, cooperation, and the harmonization of educational standards among member councils, all aimed at safeguarding, promoting, and upholding public health and safety across the regions. Attendees were organized based on regional representation, leading to the following outcomes –

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC)

- Revision and publication of the guidelines and checklists of undergraduate reciprocal recognition
- Sensitisation of Deans of Medical and Dental Schools on the revised guidelines in anticipation of the 4th cycle of EAC inspections (September October 2024)
- Carrying out of the postgraduate training/reciprocal recognition
- Development of regional internship training guidelines
- Standardisation of collegiate training across the region
- Region to provide support to Burundi, South Sudan, Somalia and DR Congo
- Dual Entry for Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (MBChB and BDS)

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

- Review and standardise the following key functions across the region (November 2024 – Workshop in Nigeria) –
- Examinations for foreign trained doctors.
- Logbooks for Housemanship/Internship
- Fitness to Practice Guide
- Policy on Practitioners' Stamp, Name Tag and Appropriate Professional apparel

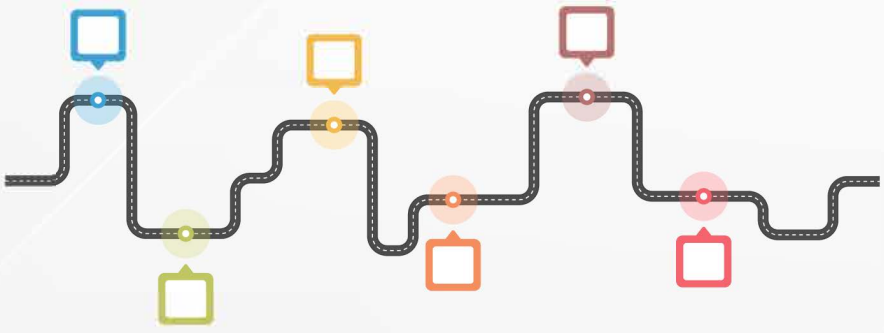
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC)

- The SADC regional bloc needed revitalisation to fulfil its mandate.

- It was resolved that the appointed Executive Committee spearheads the development of a new Strategic Plan to update the last one whose development was facilitated by Zimbabwe but was neither launched nor operationalised.

NEXT STEPS

	Steps/Activity	Date
1.	Compilation and circulation of Final Conference Report to all Member States	15 September 2024
2.	Finalisation of the AI Protocol by Legal Counsel and Registrar's Forum	30 October 2024
3,	Briefing of Member States and Sector Ministries in the various regional blocs for support in implementation of recommended AI Protocol	November 2024
4.	Timetable for implementation.	February 2025 May
5.	Submission of Quarterly Reports to AMCOA	2025
6.	Evidence-based report on progress of implementation of recommendations at #AMCOA2025	July/August 2026



CONCLUSION

As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission to foster collaboration and innovation across the healthcare sector. The success of this conference is a testament to what we can achieve when we come together with a shared vision and purpose.

We are already excited about the prospects for next year's conference and the continued growth and strengthening of our networks and partnerships. The insights and connections gained from AMCOA Annual Conference 2024 will undoubtedly inspire further advancements and improvements within our respective health systems.

Once again, thank you to everyone who contributed to making this event an extraordinary success. We look forward to welcoming you all to future AMCOA events and continuing our collective journey towards excellence in healthcare.

SIGNATURES

This report, signed on 11 September 2024, is a true reflection of the events at the AMCOA 26th Annual Conference 2024.

Adv. Esther Mutheu
AMCOA Head Rapporteur

Ms. Sadicka Komey
AMCOA Secretariat

Dr Magome Masike
Head: AMCOA Secretariat

Prof. Joel Okullo
AMCOA President

ANNEXURES

AMCOA Management and Secretariat Present

Name	Designation	Country
Prof. Joel Okullo	President	Uganda
Prof. Stanley Khainga	Member	Uganda
Dr Benjamin Wilson	Vice President	Namibia
Dr Divine Banyubala	Member	Ghana
Prof. Mulindi Mwanahamuntu	Member	Zambia
Prof. Afolabi Lesi	Member	Nigeria
Dr Magome Masike	Head AMCOA Secretariat	South Africa
Ms Sadicka Komey	AMCOA Secretariat	South Africa
Adv. Ntsikelelo Sipeka	Legal Counsel	South Africa
Adv. Michael Onyango	Legal Counsel	Kenya
Adv. Esther Mutheu	Legal Counsel	Kenya
Ms Kurhula Mndluli	AMCOA Secretariat	South Africa
Ms Rose Wafukho	AMCOA Secretariat	Kenya
Mr Duncan Mwai	AMCOA Secretariat	Kenya
Mr Samuel Kiraithe	AMCOA Secretariat	Kenya
Ms Hannah Mugo	AMCOA Secretariat	Kenya
Ms Elizabeth Yawson	AMCOA Secretariat	Ghana

The Health Regulatory Authorities of the following countries were represented, with a total of 350 delegates –

Country	Organization/Company	Head of Delegation
Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso National Medical Council	Dr Abdul Sawa Dogo
Ethiopia	Ethiopian Medical Council	Tigist Mekonnen
Eswatini	Eswatini Medical and Dental Council	Dr Makhosini Mabuza
Ghana	Medical and Dental Council, Ghana	Dr Divine Banyubala
Kenya	Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council	Prof. Stanley Khainga
Lesotho	Lesotho Medical Dental and Pharmacy Council	Dr Teboho Molise
Liberia	Liberia Medical and Dental Council	Dr Quiah Augustus Garlet
Malawi	Medical & Dental Council of Malawi	Prof. John Chisi
Namibia	Health Professions Councils of Namibia	Dr Wilson Benjamin
Nigeria	Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria	Prof. Afolabi Lesi

Country	Organization/Company	Head of Delegation
Rwanda	Rwanda Medical and Dental Council, Rwanda Allied Health Professions Council and National Council of Nurses and Midwives/Rwanda	Dr Afrika Gasana
Seychelles	Medical & Dental Council of Seychelles	Susan Fock-Tave
Sierra Leone	Medical Council of Sierra Leone	Dr Thaim Buya Kamara
South Africa	Health Professions Council of South Africa	Dr Simpiwe Sobuwa
Tanzania	Medical Council of Tanzania	Dr Mashuari Liso
Uganda	Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners Council, Allied Health Professionals Council Uganda and Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council	Prof. Joel Okullo
United States of America	IntHealth	Dr Kara Oleyn
	Federation of State Medical Boards	Dr Humayun Chaudhry
Zimbabwe	Medical & Dental Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe, Health Professions Authority of Zimbabwe, Allied Health Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe and Nursing Council of Zimbabwe	Prof. Rose Kambarami
Zambia	Ministry of Health, Health Professions Council of Zambia	

Program Director

- Ms Rose Sibisi | a Freelance Communications Expert and Bloomberg Media Initiative Africa Financial Journalism Top Performing Awardee 2022. She is a Media Entrepreneur; Founder of a Female Empowerment Enterprise "StylewithRoses" and a PR Communications PLC, "Maluba Media".

Conference Rapporteurs

- Adv. Esther Mutheu- Kenya
- Fyatilani Chirwa-Zambia
- Lloyd Bwalya-Zambia
- Yurisa Naidoo-South Africa
- Kabesa Mushinge- Zambia

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