“From A to Z of Digital Consultation: AI, Telepsychiatry, and Digital Tools in Daily Practice”

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Held alongside the 3rd Rethinking Mental Health Conference

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Course Description

Organised by the Chair of the **WPA Digital Mental Health Section**, this course provides a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of digital mental health (DMH). It covers artificial intelligence (AI), telepsychiatry, mobile health applications, and emerging technologies including virtual/augmented reality and digital therapeutics. Participants will explore both theoretical foundations and practical applications across supervised, unsupervised and hybrid models of care, with particular attention to clinical safety, equity, cultural responsiveness, ethics, privacy, and implementation.

The course is grounded in the **World Psychiatric Association Telepsychiatry Global Guidelines** and the latest **WPA Mobile Health, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technologies Guideline: Improving Access, Quality and Effectiveness Worldwide (2026)**. These provide the principal framework for understanding how digital technologies can be introduced into psychiatric practice while maintaining human oversight, patient-centred care, safety, cultural sensitivity and professional responsibility.

Adhering to the EDIT principles, the course emphasises:

- **Equity:** promoting access across genders, age groups and ethnic backgrounds.
- **Developmental considerations:** tailoring digital interventions from childhood through older adulthood.
- **Inclusion:** addressing the needs of underserved and under-represented populations.
- **Transcultural awareness:** adapting digital tools to diverse socio-cultural contexts.
- **Trust and Ethics:** ensuring privacy, confidentiality, and informed consent in line with current global guidelines for telepsychiatry and telehealth

Educational Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Integrate in-person and digital care, selecting appropriate modalities for specific clinical scenarios.
- Assess and address privacy, security and regulatory requirements (e.g., HIPAA, GDPR, regional telehealth laws) when deploying digital tools
- Identify and apply competencies needed to use telepsychiatry, mobile apps, AI-driven tools and digital therapeutics effectively.
- Design a standardised telepsychiatry service, including technical set-up, protocols, and workflow integration.
- Evaluate and utilise AI and machine-learning applications for assessment, triage, treatment planning and outcome monitoring.
- Critically appraise ethical, legal and interoperability considerations across digital tools, and implement best practices to meet evolving standards
- Understand the potential and limits of generative AI, chatbots and digital phenotyping, and position them within human-centred care.
- Incorporate virtual/augmented reality and gamified interventions where evidence supports their use.
- Develop personalised treatment plans using digital interventions (e.g., AI-assisted CBT, VR exposure therapy) and assess their effectiveness.
- Collaborate with multidisciplinary teams to implement digital mental health services in general practice, inpatient and outpatient settings.

Target Audience

Psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health professionals, trainees, and healthcare administrators interested in integrating digital tools into clinical practice. Basic familiarity with videoconferencing is recommended; pre-reading of selected articles will be provided.

Teaching Methods

- **Needs Assessment:** live polls to gauge participant experience and expectations.
- **Didactic Lectures:** concise presentations on key topics with real-world examples.

- **Interactive Demonstrations:** demonstrations of telepsychiatry platforms, AI-enabled triage tools, VR/AR applications and digital therapeutics.
- **Case-Based Discussions:** small-group analysis of clinical scenarios illustrating challenges and solutions in digital practice.
- **Break-Out Debates:** moderated discussions on ethical dilemmas, equity and cultural adaptation.
- **Question & Answer Sessions:** dedicated time for participant queries and faculty responses.
- **Resource Toolkit:** access to guidelines, competency frameworks and checklists for implementing digital mental health.

Course Outline

1. Introduction to Digital Mental Health

- State of DMH in 2026; lessons from the pandemic and the rapid expansion of AI.
- Review of current technologies and trends.

2. Telepsychiatry

- History and evidence base.
- Patient and clinician attitudes; impact on therapeutic relationships.
- Setting up a service: equipment, room design, protocol development, supervised vs unsupervised settings, primary care and hospital integration.
- Advantages and disadvantages of home-based vs institution-based telepsychiatry.
- Best practices: pre-session preparation, rapport building, and post-session follow-up.
- Legal, regulatory and reimbursement issues; informed consent and privacy.

3. Artificial Intelligence and Digital Interventions

- Foundations: what AI means for mental health;
- Current applications: AI-driven triage and early detection, digital phenotyping, predictive analytics.
- Personalized treatment: AI-supported CBT, VR/AR therapies, digital therapeutics and wearables.
- Stages of AI competency for clinicians; integrating AI into clinical workflow.
- Evaluating effectiveness and outcomes.

4. Emerging Technologies

- Mobile apps and wearables: selection criteria, evidence of effectiveness and long-term monitoring.
- Virtual and augmented reality: use cases in anxiety disorders, PTSD, and exposure therapy.
- Gamified interventions and digital therapeutics.

5. Ethics, Equity and Regulation

- Data security, privacy and consent frameworks.
- Algorithmic bias, explainability and accountability.
- Global standards and interoperability (e.g., HL7 FHIR, ISO/IEEE 11073)
- Addressing the digital divide: socio-economic barriers, language access, and inclusive design.
- Cultural and transcultural considerations; adapting tools for diverse populations.

6. Implementation and Future Directions

- Hybrid care models: integrating telepsychiatry with in-person services.
- Workflow redesign and staff training.
- Research opportunities and collaborative networks.
- Preparing for future innovations (e.g., quantum computing, advanced wearables).

Faculty

- Course Director: Davor Mucic, MD,PhD – Chair of WPA's Digital Mental Health Section;

SUGGESTED READINGS

Telepsychiatry:

1. Mucic, D., Shore, J. & Hilty, D. Overview of The World Psychiatric Association Telepsychiatry Global Guidelines. *J. technol. behav. Sci.* 9, 572–579 (2024). *https://doi.org/10.1007/s41347-023-00339-w*
2. Hilty DM, Chan S, Torous J, et al. A framework for competencies for the use of mobile technologies in psychiatry and medicine. *JMIR Uhealth Mob Health 2020; 8(2). Available at: http://mhealth.jmir.org/2020/2/e12229/.*
3. Shore J.H. , Yellowlees P, Caudill, R. et al. Best Practices in Videoconferencing-Based

Telemental Health April 2018 . *Telemedicine and e-Health , Vol. 24, No. 11., 2018. Available at: https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/full/10.1089/tmj.2018.0237*

4. Mucic D. Transcultural telepsychiatry and its impact on patient satisfaction". *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare 2010; 16: 237–242. Available at: https://davormucic.com/academic-papers/*
5. Mucic D. International Telepsychiatry, patient acceptability study". *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare. 14:241-243, 2008. Available at: https://davormucic.com/academic-papers/*
6. Mucic D. Training in Telepsychiatry. *In: Edmond H. Pi, Tan Chay Hoon and Marc H.M. Hermans (Eds). Mental Health and Illness Worldwide. Education about Mental Health and Illness , Springer publisher, 2018.*
7. Mucic D. et al. Lessons Learned or Forgotten? Impacts of COVID-19 on the Future Direction of Global (e)-Mental Health Care. *Current Psychiatry Reports (2021) 23: 86.*

AI, mHealth & VR:

1. Tabassum A. et al: Exploring the Application of AI and Extended Reality Technologies in Metaverse-Driven Mental Health Solutions: Scoping Review.J Med Internet Res 2025;27:e72400
2. J. Torous et al. The evolving field of digital mental health: current evidence and implementation issues for smartphone apps, generative artificial intelligence, and virtual reality.World Psychiatry, 2025 May 15;24(2):156–174.
3. Lee EE et al. Artificial Intelligence for Mental Health Care: Clinical Applications, Barriers, Facilitators, and Artificial Wisdom. Biol Psychiatry Cogn Neurosci Neuroimaging. 2021 Sep;6(9):856-864. doi: 10.1016/j.bpsc.2021.02.001. Epub 2021 Feb 8. PMID: 33571718; PMCID: PMC8349367.
4. Harvey PD et al. Technology and Mental Health: State of the Art for Assessment and Treatment. Am J Psychiatry. 2022 Dec 1;179(12):897-914. doi: 10.1176/appi.ajp.21121254. Epub 2022 Oct 6. PMID: 36200275.
5. Breitinger S. et al. Digital Phenotyping for Mood Disorders: Methodology-Oriented Pilot Feasibility Study. J Med Internet Res. 2023 Dec 29;25:e47006. doi: 10.2196/47006. PMID: 38157233; PMCID: PMC10787337.
6. Romanowicz M. et al. Machine Learning Identifies Smartwatch-Based Physiological Biomarker for Predicting Disruptive Behavior in Children: A Feasibility Study. J Child Adolesc Psychopharmacol. 2023 Nov;33(9):387-392. doi: 10.1089/cap.2023.0038. PMID:

37966360; PMCID: PMC10698791.

7. Dellazizzo L, Potvin S, Luigi M, Dumais A. Evidence on Virtual Reality-Based Therapies for Psychiatric Disorders: Meta-Review of Meta-Analyses. J Med Internet Res. 2020 Aug 19;22(8):e20889. doi: 10.2196/20889. PMID: 32812889; PMCID: PMC7468638.
8. Schueller SM et al. Mental Health Apps for Children and Adolescents: A Clinician-Friendly Review. J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry. 2023 Dec 18:S0890-8567(23)02251-7. doi: 10.1016/j.jaac.2023.07.1004. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 38123125.
9. Meyer A, Wisniewski H, Torous J. Coaching to Support Mental Health Apps: Exploratory Narrative Review. JMIR Hum Factors. 2022 Mar 8;9(1):e28301. doi: 10.2196/28301. PMID: 35258468; PMCID: PMC8941429.