BRIDGING THE HEALTH AI DIVIDE IN THE ASIA PACIFIC:
Policy and Regulatory Recommendations for Lower Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)

ACCESS HEALTH INTERNATIONAL

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INTRODUCTION

- AI is transforming healthcare. Without building trust in Health AI through robust policies and regulations, LMICs may be left behind
- This research highlights regulatory gaps between high-income and lower-middle-income countries, **offering targeted recommendations to empower LMICs** (India, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam) and strengthen their digital health systems

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the policy and regulatory landscape of responsible AI in 4 LMICs
- To identify gaps and propose recommendations to encourage the use of responsible AI in healthcare

FINDINGS

As of 15 August 2024

- All 4 countries have launched national AI strategies between 2020 - 2021 (except India whose launched in 2018) [1-4]
- 2 out of 4 countries (Indonesia, Vietnam) have issued health AI policies and addressed some aspects of responsible use [5-6]
- AI-SaMD guidance is generally lacking in most countries
- None of the countries have appointed a national AI safety institute
- Indonesia and the Philippines have initiated national education programs for AI ethics and safety [7-8]
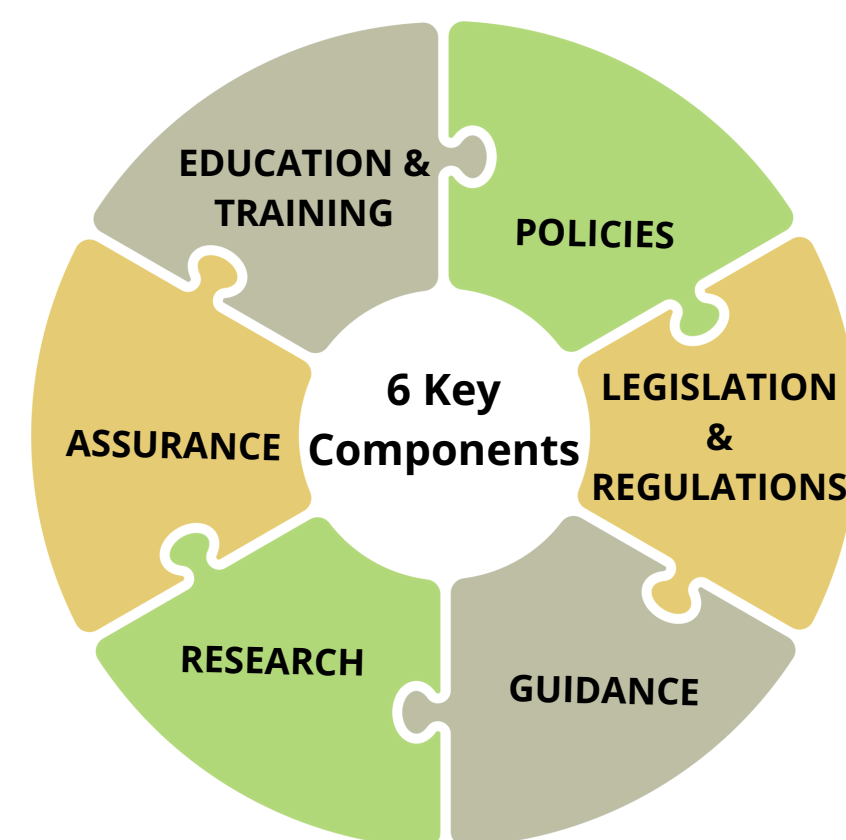- All 4 countries are in the early stages of governing AI with limited assurance mechanisms [9-12]

METHODOLOGY

We identified **six key components for Responsible Health AI**. Each includes national and healthcare initiatives, with progress indicators defined. Using literature reviews and interviews with 22 experts from 12 countries, we mapped the current Health AI landscape, forming the foundation for the findings and recommendations.

Methodology

1. Identify key indicators
2. Conduct literature review
3. Expert interviews
4. Consolidate findings & recommendations

Framework

6 Key Components:
- EDUCATION & TRAINING
- POLICIES
- LEGISLATION & REGULATIONS
- GUIDANCE
- RESEARCH
- ASSURANCE

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish/Strengthen Responsible Use Policies
- Invest in AI Safety Research
- Upskill the Health AI Workforce
- Invest in Data Infratructure
- Strengthen regulatory capacity while ensuring agility

CONCLUSION

National Health AI plans should ensure responsible use with clear ethical guidelines and robust regulation. Establishing an AI safety research institute can foster trust, while agile regulatory processes and controlled testing keep pace with advancements. High-quality data infrastructure, governance, and upskilling programs for regulators and users are essential to bridge digital health gaps and ensure safe, ethical AI in healthcare.

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