Roundtable 3:
How can we use digital media for the prevention and mitigation of antimicrobial resistance (AMR)?

WEDNESDAY 2 MARCH, 3-4.30PM AEST, (MELBOURNE TIME) VIA ZOOM

Digital media are increasingly important in healthcare and, since the COVID-19 pandemic, have gained additional impetus. Digital health can serve consumers and practitioners with information and advice and be harnessed for communications and education. Consumers can shape digital media and establish sites for support, action and the generation of new insights into healthcare. Online consults and scripts are also increasingly common, with direct implications for antimicrobial use in community settings. In addition, digital media have been used to promote awareness of AMR and to assess the impact of public communications. In this roundtable, leading experts examine digital health in the post-COVID-19 context and the related opportunities for strengthening action on AMR.

SPEAKERS

Deborah Lupton is SHARP Professor in the Faculty of Arts, Design & Architecture, University of New South Wales (UNSW) Sydney, Australia. Her research is interdisciplinary, spanning sociology, communication and cultural studies. She is located in the Centre for Social Research in Health and the Social Policy Research Centre, leading both the Vitalities Lab and the UNSW Node of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society. She is an elected Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and holds an Honorary Doctor of Social Science degree awarded by the University of Copenhagen.

Kath Albury is Professor of Media and Communication at Swinburne University of Technology, and an ARC Future Fellow (2022-2026). She is an Associate Investigator in the Swinburne Node of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society (ADMS), and co-leads the Digital Inclusion Program in Swinburne's Social Innovation Research Institute (SIRI).

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ABSTRACTS

HOW AND WHY PEOPLE USE DIGITAL HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Deborah Lupton, SHARP Professor in the Faculty of Arts, Design & Architecture, University of New South Wales (UNSW) Sydney, Australia

As a sociologist who specialises both in health and medical topics and in digital technology use, my research explores the social dimensions and lived experience of digital health technologies. In this presentation, I will begin with discussing digital health cultures. I will then draw on a series of projects I have led which address diverse social groups’ everyday experiences of digital health: from googling symptoms to using discussion forums, websites, social media groups, YouTube, apps and wearable devices. I will discuss the key findings across these projects and what they reveal about how people use these technologies and what they find beneficial or useful about them but also frustrating or disappointing. I will further reflect on the social inequalities and risks that can be part of everyday experiences of digital health. The presentation will end with some thoughts about the futures of digital health in COVID-19 times, drawing on my most recent research into people’s digital technology use since the advent of the pandemic.

WHAT IF WE DON’T NEED MORE HEALTH INFORMATION?

Kath Albury, Professor of Media and Communication at Swinburne University of Technology

This presentation draws some of the preliminary thinking that underpins my ARC Future Fellowship project ‘Digital and data literacies for sexual health policy and practice’. It reflects on the ways that academic and popular conversations frame health communication in digital contexts as ‘information’ (or mis/dis-information). I consider theorisations of the relationship between media technologies, culture and affect - particularly James Carey’s (1989) theorisation of communication as ritual - to ask: how might our understanding of both ‘digital literacies’ and ‘health literacies’ change if we shifted our focus away from individual capabilities for rational information-processing, towards collective cultural practices? What might be gained from a reparative or ameliorative reading of the ethical, communitarian, affective and aesthetic dimensions of reading, creating, archiving and sharing health-related content (Sedgwick 2002)? Finally, what practical applications might a consideration of the affective and ritual dimensions of everyday media practices offer to the fields of sexual health promotion and health communication?