



**PMAC** | PRINCE MAHIDOL  
AWARD CONFERENCE **2023**

## **PS2.3**

**HOW GEOPOLITICS OF CDOH CAN INFLUENCE THE IMPACTS OF THE 'NEW'  
TECHNOLOGIES ON HEALTH**

## | BACKGROUND

**Commercial Determinants of Health** (CDoH) is characterised as “expressions of economic and political power wielded by large corporate entities, described as powerful economic operators” (Lacy-Nichols & Robert Marten, 2020). In terms of health technology, their influences can be in **advocacy** to promote policies that support certain health technologies, **research** by conducting research and may use this research to inform policy decisions related to healthcare and technology, **standards development** to ensure interoperability and then promote the widespread adoption of those health technologies, **networking and collaboration** to build consensus and promote policy decisions that are supported by a broad range of stakeholders.

There are several influential clubs and organizations in the global health technology space that wield significant power and influence. For examples, (1) **The Digital Health Technology Alliance** (DHTA), a group of leading technology and healthcare companies that work together to promote the development and adoption of digital health technologies. Members include Apple, Google, and Microsoft. (2) **The Global Digital Health Network** (GDHN), a membership-based organization that brings together professionals from the digital health and development communities to share knowledge, collaborate, and advance the field of global digital health. Members include representatives from international organizations, governments, non-profits, and the private sector. (3) **The Health Information Management Systems Society** (HIMSS), a global non-profit organization that promotes the use of information and technology in healthcare for healthcare professionals and organizations. HIMSS also hosts an annual conference, which is one of the largest healthcare technology events in the world to showcase the latest technologies and innovations in the field. (4) **The mHealth Alliance**, a global non-profit organization that works to advance the use of mobile technology in healthcare to improve quality and reduce healthcare costs via mobile technologies. It partnered with the United Nations Foundation to develop a report on the potential of mobile health technologies to improve healthcare in low- and middle-income countries. (5) **The Personal Connected Health Alliance** (PCHA), a non-profit organization that promotes the use of personal health technologies to empower individuals to better manage their health and wellness.

## | OBJECTIVES

After attending this session attendees will:

- Learn how the commercial determinants of health and geopolitical factors can influence the development, adoption, and distribution of new health technologies.
- Understand the challenges and opportunities presented by the nexus of health technologies and geopolitics, and explore strategies to address them.
- Hear about real-world case studies that demonstrate how commercial determinants of health and geopolitical factors can impact health outcomes and how innovative approaches have been used to overcome these challenges.
- Be able to develop actionable strategies to promote innovation, access, and equity in healthcare systems worldwide, based on the insights and knowledge gained from the session, and connect with other delegates and speakers to share ideas and experiences.



Panelist / Panelist / Speaker

## Soumya Swaminathan

*Chairperson*

M S Swaminathan Research Foundation  
India

Soumya Swaminathan was most recently WHO's Chief Scientist and before that, Deputy Director-General for Programmes. Returning to India, she took over as Chairperson of the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) in February 2023.

A pediatrician from India and a globally recognised researcher on tuberculosis and HIV, she brings 30 years of experience in clinical care and research and has worked throughout her career to translate research into impactful programmes. Dr Swaminathan was Secretary to the Government of India for Health Research and Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research from 2015 to 2017. In that position, she focused on bringing science and evidence into health policy-making, building research capacity in Indian medical schools, and forging south-south partnerships in health sciences. From 2009 to 2011, she also served as Coordinator of the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases in Geneva.

She received her academic training in India, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and has published more than 480 peer-reviewed publications and book chapters. She is a Fellow of the US National Academy of Medicine, the Academy of Medical Sciences of the UK and a Fellow of all the science academies in India. She has received several honorary doctorates from the Karolinska Institute, EPFL, Lausanne and the London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. She serves on several national and global advisory bodies and committees. She is an adjunct Professor at Karolinska University in Sweden and Tufts University in Boston, USA.

She is a Board Member of the Alliance Bioversity, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), FIND, Population Foundation of India and others. She is also a Governing Council Member of the Tamil Nadu Climate Change Mission and Chair of ICMR's Scientific Advisory Board.

As WHO's inaugural Chief Scientist, Dr Swaminathan built the Science division focusing on research, quality assurance of norms and standards and digital health. She played a key role during the pandemic in coordinating scientific efforts at the WHO, as well as in setting up Covax, with a focus on equitable vaccine distribution to Low and Middle Income Countries.