

Working the quads for better eHealth: Combining four areas of stakeholder relationships

August 8 2024, by David Bradley



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[A paper](#) in the *International Journal of Health care Technology and Management* has highlighted the potential benefits of adopting a new approach to collaboration in eHealth initiatives. The approach suggested by Maria Qvarfordt, Stefan Lagrosen, and Lina Nilsson of Linnaeus

University in Kalmar, Sweden, braids together the four strands of stakeholder relationships—academia, business, the public sector, and citizens—into what the team calls a quadruple helix (QH).

Digitalization in health care encompasses the adoption of digital technologies across various sectors and is crucial for global health care advancements. eHealth specifically refers to the use of electronic tools and methods to improve health care delivery and outcomes.

For eHealth to be effective, collaboration among various stakeholders is critical. Previous studies have shown that the involvement of different stakeholders can be understood and developed with a traditional triple helix model (academia, government, and industry).

By incorporating a fourth strand—the public—which we might more formally refer to as [civil society](#), an emphasis on the importance of the end-user perspective can be incorporated into eHealth solutions. Each [stakeholder](#) group brings unique knowledge, resources, and perspectives and so can benefit the outcomes as a whole, with that whole being more than the sum of its parts in some instances.

To develop the QH approach, the researchers used a grounded theory methodology and collected and analyzed stakeholder perspectives on eHealth collaboration. They then aligned their findings from the study with an actor-resource-activity (ARA) model—a framework designed to understand [business relationships](#). The team emphasize the importance of promoting value and quality in eHealth development collaborations. They highlight the role of knowledge and competence.

Overall, the QH approach is more inclusive and participatory and will hopefully lead to more effective and more widely accepted eHealth implementations. The paper thus offers an invaluable framework for understanding and improving stakeholder collaboration in the

digitalization of health care.

More information: Maria Qvarfordt et al, Quadruple helix collaboration for eHealth: a business relationship approach, *International Journal of Healthcare Technology and Management* (2024). [DOI: 10.1504/IJHTM.2024.140387](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJHTM.2024.140387)

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