



Congress Interviews

EMJ spoke with key leaders from HLTH Europe 2025, who shared their insights on this year's impactful theme of growth, innovations in AI, women's health, digital health policy, and the future of healthcare transformation across Europe.

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Q1 HLTH Europe 2025's theme was 'growth in all its forms'. What inspired this theme?

The theme for HLTH Europe 2025 was intentionally chosen. Growth can be exhilarating; it can feel like momentum, acceleration, or finally breaking through. However, growth isn't always comfortable; it can be messy, uncertain, or even painful for individuals, organisations, and entire systems. We didn't just want to celebrate success; we wanted to acknowledge the full picture of what it takes to move forward.

No one in healthcare is asking for slow, incremental change. Patients can't wait. Systems can't stall. This community came to HLTH to challenge the status quo, and that demands bold, sometimes conflicting, and often uncomfortable ideas. Growth needs that kind of energy.

It also needs space, support, and time. We approached sustainability not only from an environmental perspective, but also through human and

organisational terms. That's why over half of this year's partners have already committed to 2026, not just returning but scaling up. In short, healthcare needs growth!

This year's theme wasn't about a single type of progress. It was about recognising that meaningful growth takes many forms, and every single one of them matters.

Q2 Could you walk us through the process of selecting this year's key themes and topics? What criteria or stakeholder input guided these decisions?

Over the summer, the content team held dozens of phone calls with leaders across the entire ecosystem, from patients to Ministers of Health. We asked everyone the same question of what keeps them up at night.

Those are the important conversations we believe deserve to be on stage. Because we do not allow pay-to-play on our track or main stages, we have the freedom to dive into those topics, the difficult conversations that often

“This community came to HLTH to challenge the status quo”

get sidelined when commercial interests come into play. It's a unique opportunity, and with over 200 sessions this year, it means that everyone can attend multiple talks that matter to them, and hopefully, walk away having learned something new.

Q3 In what ways did HLTH Europe foster opportunities for startups and early-stage innovators?

HLTH Europe offered numerous opportunities for startups and early-stage innovators. These included Founder Only sessions and the EIT Health Catapult programme finals, which showcased some of the most promising startups in Europe. The Investor Connect initiative expanded significantly, attracting senior investors from nearly every fund currently investing in healthcare.

The most significant benefit for startups was the Connect Programme, which paired them with senior leaders from their target organisations. Having previously managed sales teams, I know that HealthTech customer acquisition costs are

absurdly high. Thus, getting to sit down face-to-face with the end decision maker, who's also chosen to meet with you, is a massive growth opportunity.

Q4 What were your most memorable moments from HLTH Europe 2025?

There are two that stand out. Internally, I am in awe of the team, especially from a logistics perspective. The devil is in the details; they anticipate things I haven't seen other events consider. It's a genuine privilege to get to see and hear everyone's reactions to the work they do. Planning for >5,000 people to get the most out of a 4-day event takes tremendous care, flexibility, and innovative thinking, and they execute this with aplomb.

Externally, I was struck by the sense that the event had truly 'grown up'. It has become a place where people come to do business, not just explore new innovations and make connections. We had large hospital groups looking to source 30% of their technology pipeline for their 5-year cycle. Startups gained entry into accelerators

thanks to well-placed booths. People who had struggled to raise funds found themselves on boats full of investors and secured multiple meetings with top venture capitalists. We can get the right senior leaders into the room and give them the opportunity to interact and have those conversations, and that's the best way to move healthcare forward.

Q5 How do you envision the event evolving over the next 5 years, and have you yet decided on an overarching theme for next year's event?

I'll let you know once we've completed the full debrief over the next fortnight. There are already some brilliant ideas being discussed internally about how we can evolve the event, but we're very process-driven and want to make sure we've covered all the bases before diving into the next cycle.

Regarding the theme, our creative team has been hard at work since before this year's event, and it looks stunning. But if I told you, I'd probably need to find a new job, so you'll have to wait and see.

