



HLTH Europe 2025: Where Vision Meets Action

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IT IS with genuine pleasure and a full heart that I reflect on HLTH Europe 2025, an event that did more than bring together healthcare leaders. It brought them together with purpose. Held at the RAI Amsterdam Convention Centre, the Netherlands, this second edition of HLTH Europe delivered on the promise of its inaugural year, and then some; expanding in scale, scope, and substance while retaining a uniquely human centre.

INTRODUCTION

As both a speaker and attendee, I had the privilege of engaging in conversations that challenged my thinking, affirmed my values, and offered new perspectives on the future of healthcare transformation. At every corner, over coffee, at the StartUp Stage, and in corridor conversations, the spirit was clear: the world is not perfect, but it's the best one we have, and we must keep trying to make it better.

From vision to execution, HLTH Europe continues to set a new standard for what a health and technology congress can be.

SLOW IS SMOOTH, SMOOTH IS FAST: THE TRANSFORMATION PARADOX

One of the highlights for me was participating in a panel on organisational transformation, aptly titled 'Slow is Smooth and Smooth is Fast'. Borrowing a mantra from the United States Navy Sea

Air and Land (SEAL) special operations, we unpacked how deliberate, thoughtful change in healthcare can paradoxically deliver faster, more sustainable results. My core message was simple: transformation doesn't need to be sold as 'big'; it needs to be made human, relatable, and achievable, one clear step at a time.

“Tech can only scale care if it enhances, rather than replaces, the human touch”

Healthcare is often accused, not unfairly, of being slow to change. But smooth isn't about speed; it's about coherence. It's about aligning systems, people, and processes so they move together. True transformation is a cultural shift, not just a technological upgrade. This message resonated throughout the conference, from AI to primary care reform, with countless innovators exploring how to make change feel less like disruption and more like progress.

DATA, DESIGN, AND DIGITAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Unsurprisingly, data dominated many discussions, but this wasn't data for data's sake. HLTH Europe 2025 was brimming with examples of predictive analytics, open platforms, and real-world evidence being used to reimagine care delivery.

In a standout fireside chat, Hassan Chaudhry, Great Ormond Street Hospital, London, UK; and Hjalmar Nilsson, Founder and CEO of Neko Health, London, UK, explored the intersection of innovation, cost, and equity, particularly how we must avoid reinforcing health privilege under the guise of progress. I was struck by their commitment to transparency and user experience, with a focus on creating clinical systems that are frictionless and genuinely engaging for individuals seeking to understand their own health.

This design-centric approach was echoed throughout the conference, with many sessions championing the user as central to innovation, from wearable tech to AI-driven triage. However, with that comes accountability. As we scale AI and digital tools, we must ensure they are trustworthy, transparent, and equitable.

HEALTH IS HYBRID: THE RISE OF HUMAN-TECH COLLABORATION

A recurring theme throughout HLTH was that the future of healthcare is hybrid. It's not technology versus humans; it's people, powered by technology. Whether in sessions on women's health, refugee care, or chronic disease management, the consensus was clear: tech can only scale care if it enhances, rather than replaces, the human touch.

Nowhere was this clearer than in the UK-focused sessions, which showcased community-based models and federated AI tools that improve access and reduce variation. These weren't just theoretical models; they were blueprints being tested in real-world environments, with early signals of success.

As a system, the NHS has a unique strength in patient records and population data assets. What is needed now is the infrastructure and partnerships to turn that potential into practical delivery.





A LIVING ECOSYSTEM: MORE THAN A CONFERENCE

HLTH Europe isn't just about talks and panels; it's about the ecosystem. In every direction, I met someone I could learn from. From the StartUp Stage to the Fringe events, from scheduled meetings to impromptu introductions, the event was a live marketplace of ideas, collaboration, and shared ambition. It filled me with pride to see so many colleagues championing innovation on the global stage.

A special thank you to Lina Behrens, Head of Strategy and Content, HLTH Europe; and Henry Stoneley, Head of Health Systems and Providers, HLTH Europe, for curating such an inclusive and energising experience. You didn't just host an event, you created a movement.

SPOTLIGHT THEMES TO WATCH

In this supplement issue of *EMJ Innovations*, we will be spotlighting several key areas that emerged as defining themes from HLTH Europe 2025:

- Digital equity and access: how we ensure innovation reaches the most vulnerable populations, not just the digitally literate elite.
- Women's health innovation: moving beyond awareness to meaningful infrastructure, investment, and evidence.
- The data dividend: leveraging population health data to personalise care, diagnose cancer early, prevent disease, and deliver value.

- Tech-enabled primary and preventative care: from virtual wards to neighbourhood models, care is moving closer to home, supported by digital backbones.
- AI in real-world practice: from diagnostics to documentation, AI is moving from potential to implementation, with all the governance and cultural shifts that entails.

These are not just themes, they are movements. We are proud to share these ideas as we continue to shape a healthier, fairer, and more human future.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Conferences come and go, but HLTH Europe 2025 felt different. It was open, optimistic, and honest. We didn't shy away from hard topics, whether it was burnout, equity, or digital failure. We shared failures as freely as successes, and we did so with kindness and curiosity.

There's something powerful about being surrounded by people who care, not just about innovation, but about impact. HLTH Europe 2025 reminded me that transformation is not a solo journey. It is built in moments of connection: over coffee, in panel debates, and in late-night reflections on what care could be.

So thank you to all who contributed by speaking, sharing, listening, or simply showing up with intention. I return to my work renewed, with fresh ideas and a deeper resolve to help create systems that are not just efficient, but humane.

As ever, let's keep trying to make it better.