

Editorial/Uvodnik

Mental health in the digital era: Why evidence-based digital well-being matters more than ever?

Duševno zdravje v digitalni dobi: zakaj je na dokazih temelječe digitalno blagostanje pomembnejše kot kdaj koli prej?

Leona Cilar Budler^{1,*}

Mental health and mental well-being have become key public health priorities in contemporary society, as rapid social changes, digitalisation, and evolving lifestyles significantly affect individuals' psychological functioning. Mental well-being is now understood not merely as the absence of mental illness, but as a holistic state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being that enables individuals to cope effectively with stress, function productively, and participate actively in society (Cilar Budler et al., 2022). Epidemiological data also indicate that the prevalence of mental disorders, including depression, anxiety, and stress-related conditions, has increased in recent decades and represents a major global health challenge (Magomedova & Fatima, 2025; Spytka, 2024).

The digital era has significantly transformed how individuals communicate and perceive the world. While technological advances have produced numerous benefits, they have also raised new questions and challenges, particularly in the field of mental health. Digital technologies have greatly improved access to information, professional support, and social networks, which can be especially beneficial for those experiencing psychological distress. Online support groups, mobile mental health applications, and various digital resources are now more accessible than ever (Padma & Sarala, 2023). Developments in telepsychiatry, digital interventions, and artificial intelligence have improved accessibility to services, enabled earlier identification of problems, and facilitated more personalised treatment approaches (Romeo, 2025). Internet-based therapies, mental health applications, and online support platforms offer innovative approaches to reduce gaps in access to healthcare, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic (Magomedova & Fatima, 2025). In this context, telepsychiatry has proven to be an effective, evidence-based approach to treating various mental health

disorders, although questions remain regarding its long-term effectiveness and optimal implementation (Achtyes et al., 2023).

In the digital era, nursing plays a vital role in identifying, preventing, and managing mental health problems associated with the use of digital technologies. Nurses, particularly those working in mental health settings, are increasingly involved in telehealth, digital interventions, and online support services, contributing to patient assessment, intervention implementation, and the provision of continuous, holistic care. Digital tools also enable nurses to provide health education, promote self-management, and identify risks such as cyberbullying, digital addiction, and social isolation at an early stage (Amin et al., 2025; Kushwah, 2024). However, as nurses represent a crucial link between technology and patients in ensuring safe, accessible, and patient-centred care, digitalisation requires the development of new nursing competencies, including digital literacy, therapeutic communication in virtual environments, and the ethical and secure management of health data.

Despite the many advantages of digitalisation, research also highlights significant risks. Excessive use of digital technologies, constant connectivity, and information overload are associated with increased risk of stress, anxiety, depression, and social isolation (Scott et al., 2017). Studies (Scott et al., 2017) also indicate the emergence of problematic internet use and potential behavioural addictions, which may negatively affect social functioning and quality of life. Furthermore, digital environments introduce new psychosocial stressors, such as cyberbullying, social comparison, and the burden of constant digital availability (Romeo, 2025).

Another important area of discussion is the ethical dimension of digital mental health. Romeo (2025) highlights concerns regarding data privacy, algorithmic

¹ University of Maribor, Faculty of Health Sciences, Žitna ulica 15 2000 Maribor, Slovenia

* Corresponding author/Korespondenčni avtor: leona.cilar1@um.si



bias, and potential inequalities in accessing digital solutions. As digital technologies are often based on Western conceptualisations of mental health, they may reinforce existing social inequalities. Consequently, they may not always be sufficiently adapted to diverse cultural contexts, thus leading to less appropriate approaches and inequalities in the understanding and treatment of mental health (Tomičić & Gjorgjioska, 2024). Moreover, the commercialisation of digital mental health services raises important questions about service quality, regulation, and patient safety (Achtyes et al., 2023).

In this context, digital technologies offer both opportunities and challenges for promoting mental health. On the one hand, they enable innovative approaches to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment; on the other, they require ethically grounded, inclusive, and evidence-based methods to ensure safe and equitable use. Therefore, future development in this field requires strong interdisciplinary collaboration among research, clinical practice, and health policy to support the responsible integration of digital solutions aimed at promoting mental health and well-being in the digital era.

Slovenian translation/Prevod v slovenščino

Duševno zdravje in duševno blagostanje sta v sodobni družbi postala ključni javnozdravstveni prioriteti, saj hitre družbene spremembe, digitalizacija in spremembe načina življenja pomembno vplivajo na psihološko funkcioniranje posameznikov. Duševno blagostanje danes ne razumemo več zgolj kot odsotnost duševne motnje, temveč kot celotno stanje čustvenega, psihološkega in socialnega blagostanja, ki posamezniku omogoča učinkovito spoprijemanje s stresom, produktivno delovanje ter aktivno sodelovanje v družbi (Cilar Budler et al., 2022). Hkrati epidemiološki podatki kažejo, da se razširjenost duševnih motenj, kot so depresija, anksioznost in stresne motnje, v zadnjih desetletjih povečuje, kar predstavlja pomemben globalni zdravstveni izziv (Magomedova & Fatima, 2025; Spytška, 2024).

Digitalna doba je bistveno preoblikovala načine, kako posamezniki komunicirajo ter kako doživljajo in razumejo svet okoli sebe. Čeprav je tehnološki napredek prinesel številne prednosti, je hkrati zastavil tudi nova vprašanja in izzive, zlasti na področju duševnega zdravja. Digitalne tehnologije so pomembno izboljšale dostop do informacij, strokovne pomoči in socialne podpore, kar je lahko posebej koristno za posameznike z duševnimi stiskami. Spletne podporne skupine, mobilne aplikacije za psihološko podporo ter različni digitalni viri so danes dostopnejši kot kadar koli prej (Padma & Sarala, 2023). Razvoj telepsihatrije, digitalnih intervencij in umetne inteligence omogoča boljšo dostopnost storitev,

zgodnejše prepoznavanje težav ter bolj personalizirane načine zdravljenja (Romeo, 2025). Spletne terapije, mobilne aplikacije za duševno zdravje in spletne podporne platforme predstavljajo inovativne načine za zmanjševanje vrzeli v dostopu do zdravstvene oskrbe, zlasti po pandemiji covid-19 (Magomedova & Fatima, 2025). Telepsihatrija se je v tem primeru izkazala kot učinkovita in z dokazi podprta metoda obravnave različnih duševnih motenj, čeprav ostajajo vprašanja o dolgoročni učinkovitosti in optimalni implementaciji (Achtyes et al., 2023).

V digitalni dobi ima zdravstvena nega pomembno vlogo pri prepoznavanju, preprečevanju in obravnavi duševnih stisk, povezanih z uporabo digitalnih tehnologij. Medicinske sestre, zlasti na področju duševnega zdravja, so vse bolj vključene v uporabo telezdravja, digitalnih intervencij ter spletnih oblik podpore, pri katerih sodelujejo pri ocenjevanju stanja pacientov, izvajanju intervencij ter zagotavljanju kontinuirane in celostne zdravstvene nege. Digitalna orodja omogočajo medicinskim sestram tudi izvajanje zdravstvene vzgoje, spodbujanje samoupravljanja zdravja ter zgodnje prepoznavanje tveganj, kot so kibernetško nasilje, digitalna zasvojenost ali socialna izolacija (Amin et al., 2025; Kushwah, 2024). Ob tem pa digitalizacija zahteva tudi razvoj novih kompetenc zdravstvene nege, kot so digitalna pismenost, terapevtska komunikacija na daljavo ter etično in varno ravnanje z zdravstvenimi podatki, saj so prav medicinske sestre ključni povezovalni člen med tehnologijo in pacientom pri zagotavljanju varne, dostopne in na pacienta usmerjene zdravstvene nege.

Kljub številnim prednostim digitalizacije raziskave opozarjajo tudi na pomembna tveganja. Prekomerna uporaba digitalnih tehnologij, stalna povezanost in informacijska preobremenjenost so povezani s povečanim tveganjem za stres, anksioznostjo, depresijo ter socialno izolacijo (Scott et al., 2017). Raziskava (Scott et al., 2017) prav tako opozarja na pojav problematične uporabe interneta in mogočih vedenjskih odvisnosti, ki lahko negativno vplivajo na socialno funkcioniranje in kakovost življenja. Razen tega digitalna okolja ustvarjajo nove psihosocialne stresorje, kot so kibernetško nasilje, socialna primerjava in obremenjenost zaradi nenehne digitalne dostopnosti (Romeo, 2025).

Pomembno področje razprave predstavlja tudi etična dimenzija digitalnega duševnega zdravja. Romeo (2025) opozarja na vprašanja zasebnosti podatkov, algoritmične pristranskosti ter potencialne neenakosti pri dostopu do digitalnih rešitev. Digitalne tehnologije lahko namreč tudi poglobljajo že obstoječe družbene neenakosti, saj pogosto temeljijo na zahodnih pogledih na duševno zdravje. Zaradi tega niso vedno dovolj prilagojene različnim kulturnim okoljem, kar lahko povzroči manj primerne metode ter neenakosti v razumevanju in obravnavi duševnega zdravja (Tomičić & Gjorgjioska, 2024). Razen tega

komercializacija digitalnih storitev duševnega zdravja zastavlja vprašanja o kakovosti storitev, regulaciji ter varnosti pacientov (Achtyes et al., 2023).

V tej okoliščini postaja jasno, da digitalne tehnologije predstavljajo hkrati priložnost in izziv za promocijo duševnega zdravja. Po eni strani omogočajo inovativne pristope k preventivi, diagnostiki in zdravljenju, na drugi strani pa zahtevajo razvoj etično utemeljenih, vključujočih in na dokazih temelječih metodah, ki bodo zagotavljale varno in pravično uporabo tehnologije. Zato je za prihodnji razvoj področja ključno interdisciplinarno povezovanje raziskav, klinične prakse in zdravstvenih politik, ki bodo omogočile odgovorno integracijo digitalnih rešitev v podporo duševnemu zdravju in blagostanju v digitalni dobi.

Conflict of interest/Nasprotje interesov

The author confirms that there are no conflict of interest./Avtorica izjavlja, da ni nasprotja interesov.

Literature

Achtyes, E. D., Glenn, T., Monteith, S., Geddes, J. R., Whybrow, P. C., Martini, J., & Bauer, M. (2023). Telepsychiatry in an era of digital mental health startups. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 25, 263–272.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-023-01425-9>

PMid:37166622; PMCID:PMC10172730

Amin, S. M., Mohamed, M. A. E. S., Metwally El-Sayed, M., & El-Ashry, A. M. (2025). Nursing in the digital age: The role of nursing in addressing cyberbullying and adolescents mental health. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 32(1), 57–70.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jpm.13085>

PMid:39016201

Cilar Budler, L., Stiglic, G., Barr, O., & Pajnikihar, M. (2025). Adolescents' mental well-being and social support: Mixed methods study. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 34(6), Article e70195.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.70195>

PMid:41392999; PMCID:PMC12703680

Kushwah, A. (2024). Digital health and telepsychiatry: Opportunities and challenges for mental health nursing. *Brio International Journal of Nursing Research*, 5(1), 224–233.

<https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.77683>

PMid:39974249; PMCID:PMC11836072

Magomedova, A., & Fatima, G. (2025). Mental health and well-being in the modern era: A comprehensive review of challenges and interventions. *Cureus*, 17(1), Article e77683.

<https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.77683>

PMid:39974249; PMCID:PMC11836072

Padma, M. & Sarala, T. (2023). Mental health in the digital era. A two-day national level conference on education 5.0: Revolutionizing learning for the future 26.-27.05.2023 (pp.15–20).

Romeo, V. M. (2025). Mental health in the pre-digital and post-digital eras: An epigenetic perspective. *KOS Journal of Public Health and Integrated Medicine*, 1(1), 1–7.

Scott, D. A., Valley, B., & Simecka, B. A. (2017). Mental health concerns in the digital age. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 15, 604–613.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-016-9684-0>

Spytska, L. (2024). Anxiety and depressive personality disorders in the modern world. *Acta Psychologica*, 246, Article 104285.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104285>

PMid:38642453; PMCID:PMC12798610

Tomičić, A., & Gjorgjioska, M. A. (2024). Epistemic inequality in the digital era: Unpacking biases in digital mental health. *Theory & Psychology*, 34(6), 777–797.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/09593543241279131>

Cite as/Citirajte kot:

Cilar Budler, L. 2026. Mental health in the digital era: Why evidence-based digital well-being matters more than ever? *Obzornik zdravstvene nege*, 60(Suppl 1), 84–86. <https://doi.org/10.14528/snr.2026.60.Suppl.1.3382>