

Title:

Digital Healthcare and the Emergence of a More-Than-Now Ethics of Care: Speculative Practices in Portugal

Author:

José Carlos Pinto da Costa

josepintodacosta@fcsb.unl.pt

Short Abstract

This presentation examines how digital healthcare in Portugal is being (re)shaped through collaborative practices. It explores how these transformations give rise to an emergent ethics of care, enabling participatory, relational, and more-than-now approaches to co-constructing healthcare futures.

Long Abstract:

Portuguese healthcare is being transformed as digital technologies intersect with institutional infrastructures, professional practices, and patient experiences. These shifts are not simply imposed but unfold through everyday negotiations, improvisations, and collaborative work among healthcare professionals, system designers, policymakers, and patients.

Drawing on ethnographic engagement and participatory, speculative methods, this presentation explores how actors experiment with care in ways that generate a new, emergent ethics. Unlike traditional ethical frameworks—principlism, virtue ethics, consequentialism, or classical ethics of care—this ethics arises through situated practice, mediated by digital infrastructures, data flows, and collaborative decision-making. It emphasizes responsiveness, relationality, and collective moral reasoning enacted in real-time.

From an STS perspective, these practices reveal how healthcare futures are actively co-produced in the present. Speculative interventions—such as design experiments—make visible the contingency of socio-technical arrangements and open alternative pathways for more just, equitable, and resilient care across various stakeholders' standpoints.

Aligned with the panel's focus on speculative and design-based approaches to caring world-making, this contribution demonstrates how digital transformations do not just implement care but reshape what ethical responsibility looks like, creating new modes of reflection, collaboration, and experimentation in healthcare.