Navigating Health Inequalities in the EU through Artificial Intelligence

EU Health Policy Platform Thematic Network 2022-23: Joint Statement Presentation 19th April 2023

Brunel University London

HAI HEALTH ACTION INTERNATIONAL

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Contextual Background

- Use of AI in the health sector rapidly growing

- Growing evidence of risks for patients' health, wellbeing, and fundamental rights in absence of appropriate legislative/ governance frameworks

- Increased risks for key populations

layering patterns of inequalities related to: age, gender identity, sexual orientation, cultural identity, ethnicity, and race, (digital) literacy, disability and (mental) health status and residence status
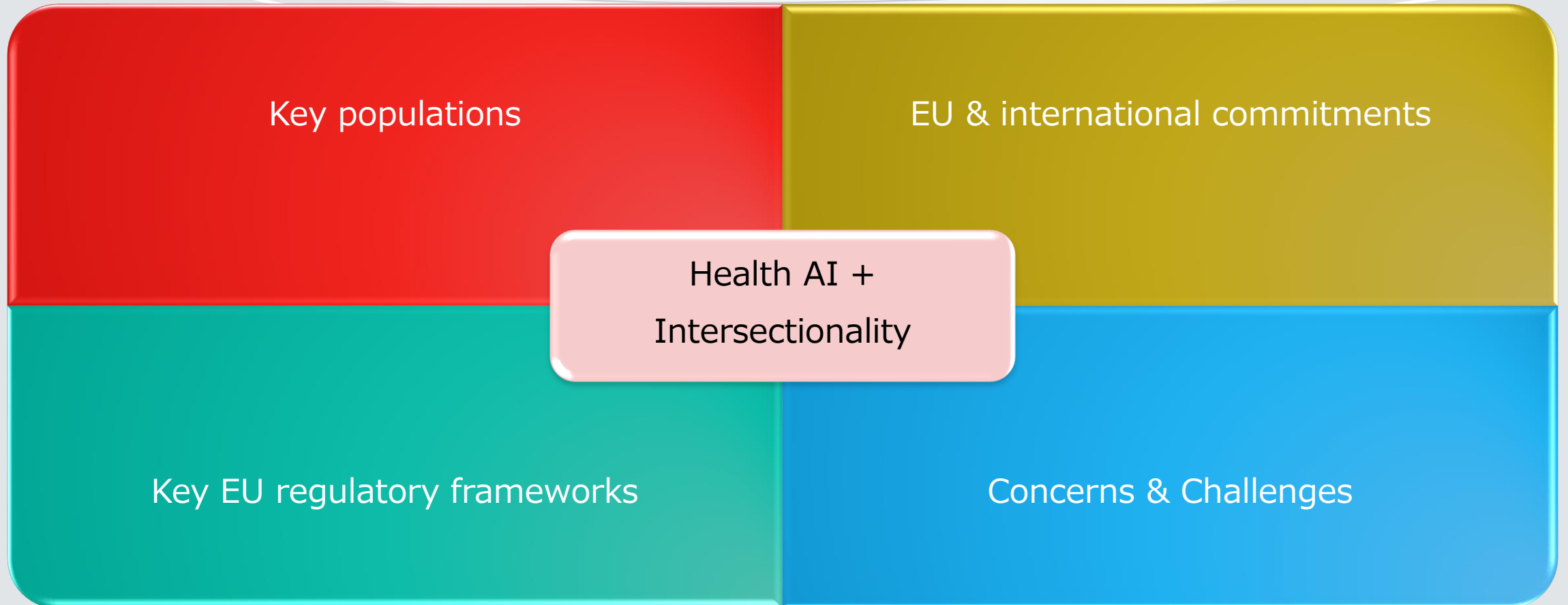
Our approach

- **Webinar 1**: Outlining **legal dimensions** of AI in the EU and relationship with health and fundamental rights

- **Webinar 2**: Stakeholders' roundtable discussion with diverse interest groups sharing perspectives on risks and opportunities of health AI

  ⟹ Basis of Joint Statement (JS)

  ⟹ Draft JS received input from > 10 organisations

The Joint Statement: A Cross-Sectoral Approach

Directing the use of AI in responsible, participatory, ethical and equitable ways
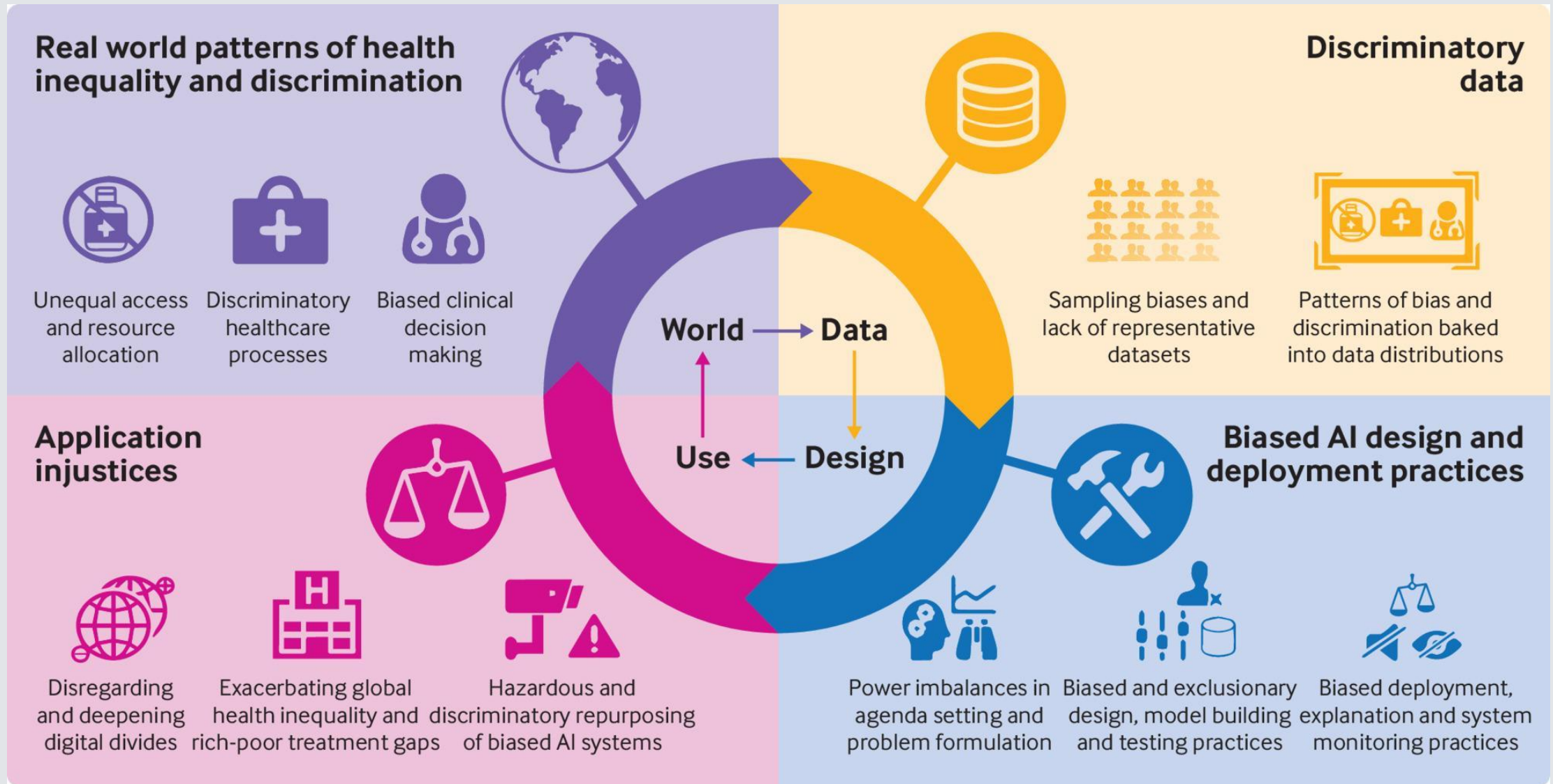
Cross-Sectoral Approach and Focused on EU-level initiatives

Key populations

EU & international commitments

Health AI + Intersectionality
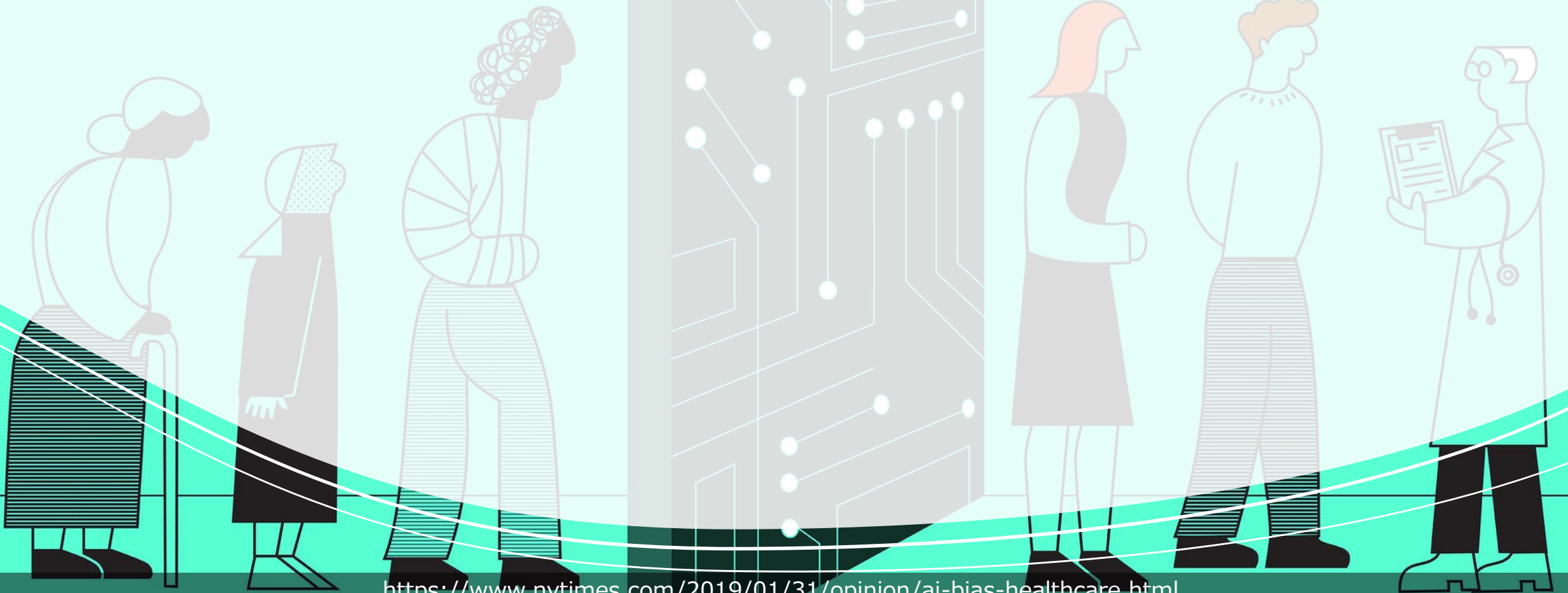
Key EU regulatory frameworks

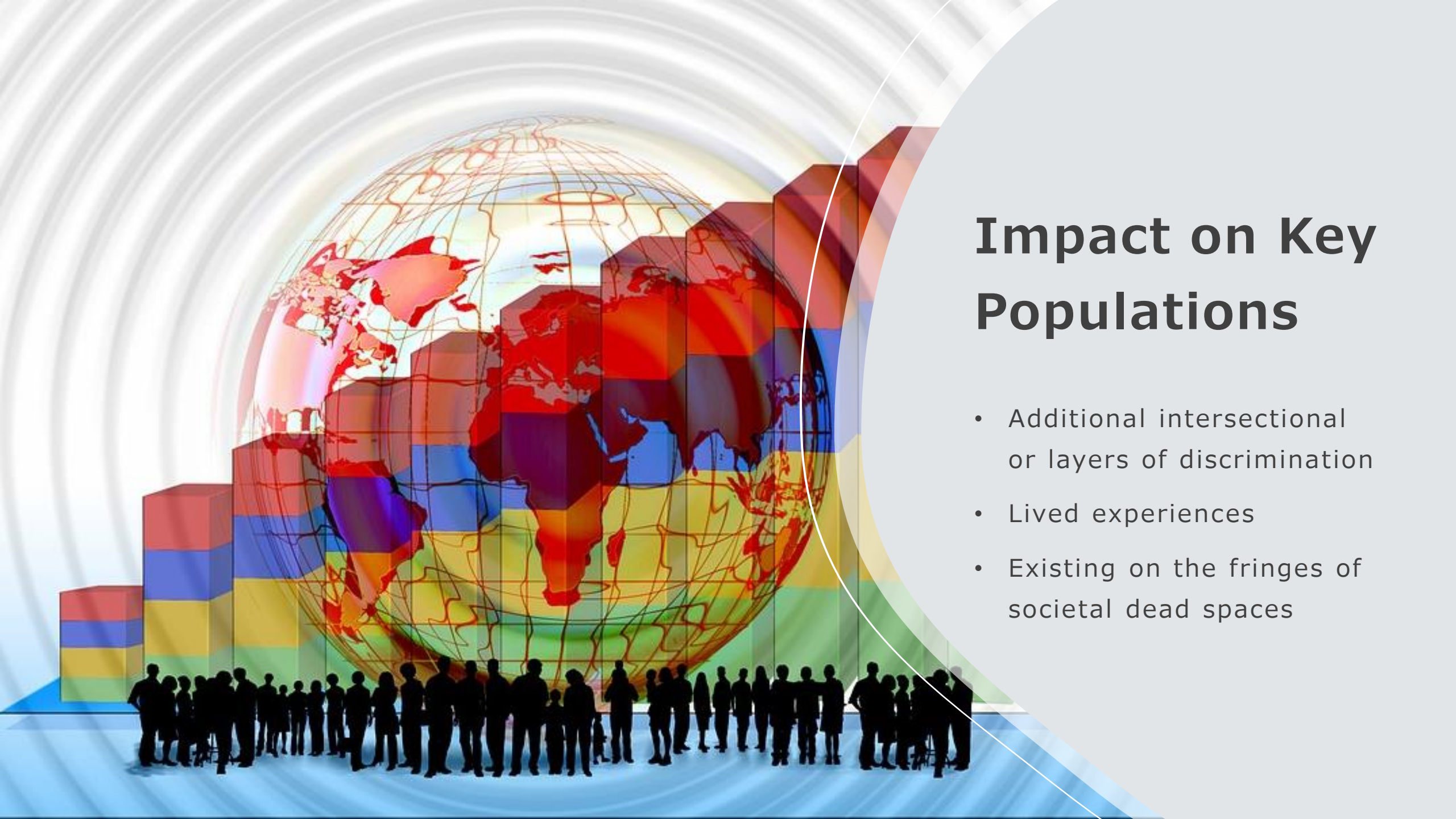Concerns & Challenges

Health AI implications for key populations

Cascading effects of health inequality and discrimination manifest in the design and use of artificial intelligence (AI) systems.

Real world patterns of health inequality and discrimination

- Unequal access and resource allocation
- Discriminatory healthcare processes
- Biased clinical decision making

Discriminatory data

- Sampling biases and lack of representative datasets
- Patterns of bias and discrimination baked into data distributions

Application injustices

- Disregarding and deepening digital divides
- Exacerbating global health inequality and rich-poor treatment gaps
- Hazardous and discriminatory repurposing of biased AI systems

Biased AI design and deployment practices

- Power imbalances in agenda setting and problem formulation
- Biased and exclusionary design, model building and testing practices
- Biased deployment, explanation and system monitoring practices

World → Data
Use ← Design

"On a societal level, AI is exacerbating structural inequalities and health inequalities due to existing historical, social, and cultural patterns of discrimination and systems of oppression, which most key populations have extensively experienced."

Impact on Key Populations

- Additional intersectional or layers of discrimination

- Lived experiences

- Existing on the fringes of societal dead spaces

AI implications for key populations

- AI is a technical tool, which cannot solve complex and multi-faceted issues of societal, cultural, and environmental origin

- Fair representation (in data, design, research, and technological development), trust, human rights, and anti-discrimination, essential

- AI to reduce health inequalities can only be developed in a community-based and radically co-creational way

Recommendations: General measures for Health AI

- Recognising the risk of overestimating AI's benefits and underestimating its limitations and detriments, in health care as well as more generally

- Recognising the existing inequalities in access to healthcare and the potential detrimental effects of AI used in healthcare.

- Require all AI systems used in the health sector to undergo an impact and ethical assessment and be subject to oversight

- Fostering potential ways for minimising risks of discrimination and bias

- Ensuring robust protection of personal data and confidentiality

- Setting up effective redress mechanisms allowing patients to contest use of the AI system/challenge the decision

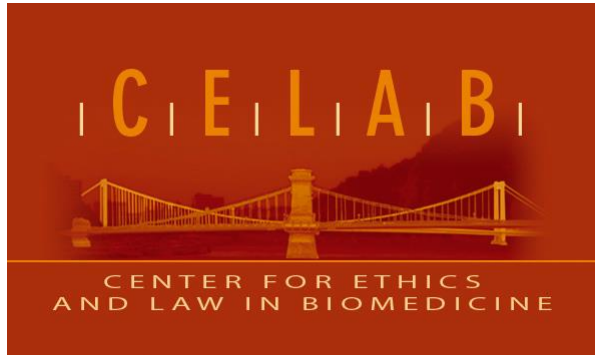- Setting up public EU wide system recording usage of Health AI

Recommendations:
Specific measures for Health AI

- Improving infrastructure, opportunity, means, access and services to innovative treatments and therapies for all those who need them across Europe, with specific attention to key populations

- Furthering specific measures to ensure unbiased and unadulterated information on evidence-based public health and healthcare needs (especially for key populations)

- Involve people with lived experience in all stages of the development of AI, using a community centred approach

- Introducing the 'firewall' - creating legal, technical, and organizational separation enforcement activities and service provision to the same individuals

Early Endorsements of the Joint Statement by:

THANK YOU

Our Joint Statement can also be found on our Thematic Network Page here.

Please feel free to contact us if you would like to endorse the JS or if you have any further questions.

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