Presentation theme: Navigating Ethical Risks in AI Adoption for Social Services

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Abstract

Background and purpose

The presentation will unveil initial insights obtained during a research project development phase. It is based on a preliminary, non-exhaustive, and selective literature review conducted for an upcoming research project that aims to uncover the possibilities of applying ethically compliant Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Lithuania's social service sector, relying on the experience of technologically developed countries such as Canada and Italy, where the digitalization of public services, and specifically social services, is highly advanced.

Main points and implications

The presentation will cover: a) the main research problem intended to be explored; b) the planned research framework; and c) its potential results and benefits for different stakeholders in the social work field. Firstly, current political declarations about AI development in various socio-economic contexts will be presented. The existing forms and variety of AI technologies will be overviewed, and examples demonstrating AI's success in solving a range of social problems, as well as in delivering various social services within specific institutional settings, will be discussed. The most significant ethical challenges will be emphasized. Secondly, the value chain approach will be introduced as a conceptual framework for identifying key stages in the social service process—such as access to social services, needs identification, planning, service delivery, and evaluation—where AI is employed. Within this framework, various AI technologies, including large language models, robotics, and others that are compatible and usually applicable to these stages will be reviewed. Then opportunities for preventing or addressing AI-related ethical risks and problems will be discussed. All of this will lay the foundation for creating a practical model for integrating ethically coherent AI into Lithuania's social service sector. Finally, this research project is expected to provide key insights for: a) Policymakers and service organizers, offering guidance on human resource investment, essential skills for AI integration, impact measurement, risk management, and selection of AI forms; b) Service providers and practitioners, who will receive guidelines for unbiased AI assessment, preserving professional autonomy, and maximizing AI benefits; c) Service clients, who will be given instruction and advice on addressing harm, ensuring transparent decision-making, and protecting privacy using AI.

Relation to conference's aims and themes

The presentation concentrates on the ethical challenges in AI for social welfare and closely aligns with the conference's topics, such as the designing and engineering of various public services: social, educational, health services, and how digitalization, especially the introduction of AI, can enhance the accessibility of these services. The Lithuanian case may illustrate one of the possible scenarios of how AI systems can increase the efficiency of different stages of social services and demonstrate how related ethical challenges may be addressed.