

# NEWSLETTER

DIGITAL MEDIA IN CHRONIC DISEASE SELF-MANAGEMENT

Dear readers,

Welcome to our second newsletter of 2025! As we reflect on the past months, we're excited to share recent highlights and upcoming activities from the DISELMA research unit. In May, we presented our work at the CAS Showcase "An App a Day Keeps the Doctor Away!" at the Center for Advanced Studies in Munich—a valuable opportunity for interdisciplinary exchange. A key milestone was our successful preconference at the ICA Annual Conference in Denver, titled "Boon or bane? The role of digital media in disease prevention and management." Communication scholars came together to explore the evolving role of digital tools in health contexts. This edition spotlights Nariman Sawalha's PhD project on how motivation influences long-term use and effects of mHealth in diabetes self-management. Looking ahead, we warmly invite you to our upcoming research colloquia in July and August and share a preview of our team's contributions to the CommPH Conference in Munich and the European Conference on Health Communication in Braga. Thanks for following along—we're glad you're with us!

Warm regards,

Constanze Rossmann

LMU Munich, Spokesperson of the DISELMA Research Unit



## Recap

**DISELMA at the  
Center for Advanced Studies**



On May 8, 2025, DISELMA took center stage at LMU's Center for Advanced Studies (CAS) as part of the renowned CAS Showcase series. The event, titled "An App a Day Keeps the Doctor Away!", offered a platform to present selected findings from the DISELMA to an interdisciplinary academic audience. The evening began with an overview of DISELMA's structure as a DFG-funded research unit in communication studies exploring how digital media can support individuals in the self-management of chronic illnesses. The two LMU-based individual projects, "Effects" and "Healthcare", shared first results from an ongoing meta-analysis on the effectiveness of mobile media and early findings from a physician survey on the use and recommendation of digital tools for self-management. The discussion, moderated by Barbara Baumann, underscored the relevance of communication strategies and media design in empowering patients to take a more active role in their health.

Audience questions reflected strong interest in both theoretical and applied aspects of the research, including future implementation and ethical considerations. The CAS Showcase format proved to be an ideal space for interdisciplinary dialogue—a core mission of the Center for Advanced Studies, which aims to foster cross-disciplinary exchange and international collaboration on pressing contemporary issues.

## DISELMA's Preconference ahead of the ICA 2025 in Denver: Boon or bane?

### The role of digital media in disease prevention and management

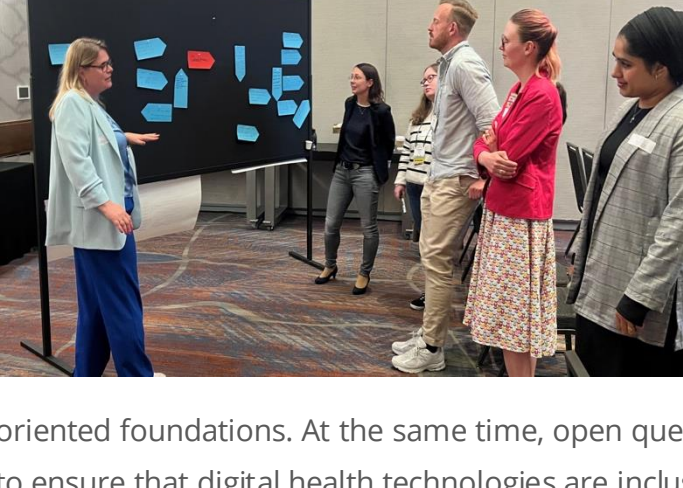
With the divisions: **Health Communication, Communication and Technology, Mobile Communication**

On June 12, 2025, DISELMA successfully hosted the ICA preconference "Boon or Bane? The Role of Digital Media in Disease Prevention and Management"—a focused academic gathering held ahead of the annual conference of the International Communication Association (ICA). Organized within the disciplinary framework of communication science, the preconference was supported by three ICA divisions: the Health Communication Division, the Communication and Technology (CAT) Division, and the Mobile Communication Division. The day began with a welcome address from the DISELMA organizing team, who shared the origins of the preconference idea—first conceived at ICA 2024 in Australia—and emphasized the need for theory-driven, methodologically diverse approaches to understanding digital health.



A highlight of the program was the keynote by Anne-Linda Camerini, Lecturer and Researcher at the Faculty of Biomedical Sciences at University of Lugano. In her talk, "Digital Health and Communication Research: Challenges and Opportunities for Scholarly Impact," she explored how communication scholars can contribute to the field of digital health, offering reflections on methodological

innovation, real-world application, and the evolving relationship between digital media and health behavior. The program continued with a project presentation session displaying ongoing larger-scale research projects on digital media use in chronic disease contexts. These sessions provided valuable insights into new work and fostered exchange across diverse areas of health communication research. Two high-density poster sessions highlighted the work of early-career scholars. After short presentations these interactive sessions continued with lively discussions moderated by Andy King (University of Utah) and Nehama Lewis (University of Haifa).



In the afternoon, Constanze Rossmann highlighted DISELMA's overarching Ecological Model of Digital Chronic Disease Self-Management. The preconference concluded with a collective discussion session chaired by Veronika Karnowski and Claudia Riesmeyer. Guided by the questions "What answers are you leaving with?" and "Which questions remain?", participants agreed that addressing digital health requires multi-level perspectives, shared challenges, and strong ethical and equity-

oriented foundations. At the same time, open questions remain around how to define effectiveness and how to ensure that digital health technologies are inclusive, sustainable, and meaningfully connected to real-world practice. It was an inspiring and energizing preconference that sparked meaningful dialogue and connections.

## PhD Projects

### IN DISELMA

Chronic conditions like diabetes require continuous self-management and adaptation—day after day, year after year. Mobile health technologies offer new ways to support this ongoing effort. Yet a key challenge persists: how can individuals remain motivated to use these technologies consistently and sustain their self-management behaviors over time? My dissertation addresses this question by examining how motivation shapes the continued use of mHealth—and what long-term effects this has on chronic disease self-management. Using a longitudinal panel-based study conducted within IP2: Effects, I explore how individuals with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes engage in mobile self-management over time.



**Nariman Sawalha**  
LMU Munich  
Individual Project: Effects

**„How does motivation influence the continuous use of mHealth—and what are the long-term effects on self-management?“**

The goal is to go beyond short-term usage data and understand the motivational mechanisms that drive lasting change in self-management behaviors and health outcomes. By focusing on motivation as a dynamic factor, this research sheds light on how mobile health solutions can be designed and implemented more effectively—not just to be used, but to stay useful in the daily lives of people managing chronic conditions.

## Upcoming Research Colloquia



**„Trends and Diversity in the Use of eContacts in Denmark: A Register-based Study from 2005-2019“**

Join us for this event with **Patrik Harnisch** (Bielefeld University) on trends and diversity in the use of eContacts on **July 4, 2025, from 11 to 12 am (CEST)**. No registration needed.

[Zoom link](#)

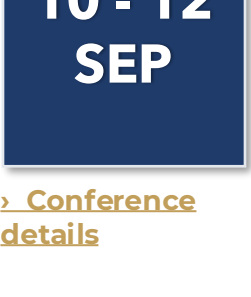


**„Implementing telerehabilitation in clinical practice: A physiotherapist's perspective from a Czech university hospital in Brno“**

Join us for this event with **Michaela Sládečková** (Masaryk University) on telerehabilitation in clinical practice on **August 1, 2025, from 10 to 11 am (CEST)**. No registration needed.

[Zoom link](#)

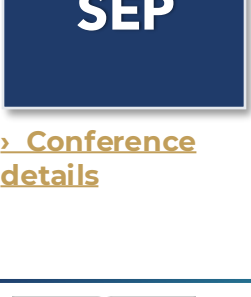
## Upcoming Conferences



**CommPH: Joint annual conference of the DGpuK Health and Science Communication Divisions (Munich, Germany)**

Within the framework of the theme 'Communicating Planetary Health', IP1: Use, IP2: Effects, IP5: Organizations, and IP6: Reporting will present their findings at the Joint Annual Conference of the Health and Science Communication Divisions of the DGpuK.

[Conference details](#)



**European Conference on Health Communication (Braga, Portugal)**

IP3: Healthcare presents its findings on the topic "Ideally on Equal Terms? Physicians' Perception of the Physician-Patient Relationship" at the European Conference on Health Communication.

[Conference details](#)