DISELMA
DFG RESEARCH UNIT
DIGITAL MEDIA IN
CHRONIC DISEASE
SELF-MANAGEMENT

Q3 2026 • October

NEWSLETTER

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Dear readers,

Welcome to our third newsletter of 2026! Here's what the DISELMA Research Unit has been up to over the last three months and what's coming next. In September, our team headed to Brno, Czechia, to share three papers at the 11th European Communication Conference (ECC) of ECREA, and to Münster for the annual conference of the DGPuK Science Communication Division, where Franca Singh and Julia Metag won second place in the "Best Conference Submission Awards". Congratulations! This issue also features a podcast episode with Claudia Riesmeyer on self-efficacy in chronic respiratory conditions, plus Franca Singh and Julia Metag's new article on how German media cover chronic disease and climate-related weather events. Looking ahead, enjoy a preview of our contributions to the upcoming annual conference of the DGPuK Health Communication Division in Chemnitz this November.

Warm regards,

Constanze Rossmann
LMU Munich, Spokesperson of the DISELMA Research Unit

CONFERENCE CONTRIBUTIONS

11TH EUROPEAN COMMUNICATION CONFERENCE

ECREA 2026
SHIFTING GROUNDS
PATHS, CONNECTIONS, AND FUTURES

8–11 SEPTEMBER 2026
BRNO, CZECH REPUBLIC



From September 8–11 2026, members of DISELMA shared their research at the 11th European Communication Conference (ECC) of ECREA in Brno, Czechia. Under the theme "Shifting Grounds: Paths, Connections, and Futures", the conference brought together communication and media scholars from across Europe and beyond. We were there with three presentations:

IP1: Use What is the current empirical evidence on the use of mHealth technologies in different asthma and COPD self-management domains?

🔍 Drawing on a systematic review across five databases, IP1 combined AI-aided screening based on active learning (ASReview LAB) with independent double screening.

💡 Research focuses predominantly on medical self-management in intervention-based studies, while other domains, especially emotional self-management, remain underrepresented. This imbalance risks suggesting that digital media matter mainly for medical self-management, while their potential beyond it has received limited consideration.



IP3: Healthcare & IP4: Peer: What do patients themselves understand by a "good" patient role in chronic illness, and why do they sometimes deliberately choose not to fulfill it?

🔍 Drawing on two semi-structured in-depth interviews studies with a total of 78 patients with type 1 and type 2 diabetes, COPD, and asthma, IP3 and IP4 explored patients' perspectives on this role in their interactions with physicians and in their private lives.

💡 Patients see the "good patient" as highly motivated and self-reliant, for example in using digital media to manage their illness, but this ideal is rarely achieved in everyday life. Instead of openly addressing conflicts, many patients keep their difficulties to themselves. Patients describe how this can lead to a vicious cycle of frustration and powerlessness for physicians, relatives, and themselves alike.



IP5: Organization: Who do health organizations consider responsible for the success of mHealth self-management?

🔍 In a multi-stakeholder survey, IP5 asked respondents from health organizations to rank the actors involved.

💡 Nearly 50% ranked patients themselves first, followed by the state, physicians, and health insurers. Since successful self-management depends as much on structural conditions and professional support as on individual effort, this focus on individual responsibility risks obscuring structural responsibilities.



IP6: Reporting | DGPuK Science Communication, Münster

App-solutely Certain? How the German Media Handles Evidence and Uncertainty

Awarded second place for Best Submission: IP6 presented their study on how German media handle evidence and uncertainty at the DGPuK Science Communication conference in Münster.

On September 25, 2026, Franca Singh and Julia Metag (IP6: Reporting) from the University of Münster presented their research at the annual conference of the DGPuK Science Communication Division in Münster. Their presentation "App-raising the Evidence – Scientific Evidence and Uncertainty in Media Coverage and User-Generated Content of Digital Self-Management for Chronic Disease" explored how scientific evidence and uncertainty were addressed in German media about digital self-management technologies for the chronic conditions diabetes, asthma, and COPD.

Drawing on a manual content analysis of 1,004 media items (2021 to mid-2025) and 518 evidence statements from print and online newspapers, customer and special-interest magazines, TV programs, online news sites, newspapers' Instagram channels, health forums, and health influencers, the study investigated whether and how scientific evidence was referenced and how scientific certainty and uncertainty were communicated.

The results showed that scientific evidence was addressed in 23 percent of the articles, with individual studies and expert opinions clearly dominating over reviews or meta-analyses. Certainty was constructed mainly through single findings or experts' experiences rather than aggregated evidence, while explicit scientific uncertainty remained rare (7 percent of articles) compared to implicit uncertainty (20 percent). Special-interest magazines carried the largest share of evidence-related coverage, and the analysis revealed significant differences between media types in how evidence and uncertainty were addressed. These findings underline how rarely scientific evidence and its inherent uncertainty are conveyed in media coverage and online communication about digital health technologies, pointing to the need for more nuanced science communication in this field. We are also delighted to share that the submission received second place in the "Best Submission" awards at the conference.





PODCAST FEATURE

"Your condition is not curable." Many people living with a chronic respiratory condition hear this sentence at some point. But "not curable" doesn't mean "nothing can be done." This is where the concept of self-efficacy comes in, which PD Dr. Claudia Riesmeyer (IP3: Healthcare) discussed as a guest on the German-language podcast Der lange Atem ("The Long Breath") with sports and respiratory physiotherapist Brigitte Schmailzl. As defined by Albert Bandura, self-efficacy is the belief that one can master challenges through one's own actions. What matters most is not actual ability but confidence in it. That confidence grows through personal experiences of success, role models, and encouragement from others.



Podcast by Deutsche Lungenstiftung

For people living with asthma or COPD, this is especially relevant: Self-efficacy is closely linked to self-management, such as taking medication regularly, recognizing triggers, and monitoring one's own symptoms. In the DISELMA Research Unit, we investigate how digital media can support people in doing this.

Listen here!

DISELMA PUBLICATIONS



The newly published open access article by Franca Singh and Julia Metag (IP6: Reporting), "In Sickness and in Heat – A Content Analysis of German Media Coverage of Chronic Diseases and Climate-Related Weather Events", published in Environmental Communication, asks how German media connect chronic illness and climate-related weather events – from high temperatures disrupting blood glucose regulation to particulate matter impairing respiratory health in people with asthma or COPD – and what role scientific evidence and uncertainty play in this coverage. Based on a manual content analysis of 429 articles published between 2010 and mid-2025, they find that reporting reliably foregrounds health risks and positions people with chronic conditions as a vulnerable group.

429 Articles analyzed (2010 – mid-2025)

69% of articles refer to scientific evidence

335 vs 70 Health Severity Frames vs Action Frames

33% of evidence statements address scientific uncertainty

Find the open access article here!

💡 **What stands out**, however, is the gap this leaves: coverage is problem- rather than solution-oriented. Concrete adaptation, prevention, or coping strategies barely feature. A similar pattern shows in how evidence is handled: only a minority of reports explicitly articulated limitations or conflicting interpretations.

UPCOMING

11. Jahrestagung der DGPuK-Fachgruppe Gesundheitskommunikation in Chemnitz

Gesundheit neu vernetzt:
Von A wie Algorithmen bis Z wie Zyklus-Tracking

11.-13. November 2026



Gesundheitskommunikation
Fachgruppe der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (DGPuK)

DISELMA

TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT CHEMNITZ

Wednesday, November 11

16:00–17:30 IdeenReich
Workshop 3: Policy Café zum Einsatz KI-basierter Digitalanwendungen im Diabetesmanagement
IP4 Chair: Doreen Reifegerste, Universität Bielefeld

Thursday, November 12

9:50–10:50
Panel 1: Best Paper Panel
IP2 **Sawalha, Lux & Rossmann:** Einsteigen, Aussteigen, Dranbleiben: Eine Latent-Transition-Analyse von vierwelligen Paneldaten zur Nutzung mobiler Medien im Diabetes-Selbstmanagement
IP4 **Reifegerste, Lütke Lanfer, Esser, Ludorf, Dette & Peitzmeier:** Of Use or not of Use? Die Funktionen digitaler und analoger Ressourcen im Unterstützungsrepertoire von Menschen mit chronischen Erkrankungen

14:10–15:10
Panel 4: Vernetzung mit Grenzen
IP3 **Kammerer:** Grenzen des (digitalen) Diabetes-Selbstmanagements und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Gesundheitsversorgung und -förderung chronisch kranker Inhaftierter
IP3 **Riesmeyer & Kammerer:** Wie Ärzte ihre Beziehung zu ihren chronisch kranken Patienten wahrnehmen. Befunde einer Mixed-Method-Studie

15:20–16:20
Poster Session: Zwischen App und Algorithmus
IP1 **Brill, Wiedicke & Karnowski:** (Un)Sichtbare KI? Wahrnehmung künstlicher Intelligenz in der Nutzung mobiler Medien im Selbstmanagement chronischer Erkrankungen

*All talks in German

See the full program →

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