

Summary of our contribution to health data governance

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the world's biggest killer, claiming 18.5 million deaths every year. Across the developed and developing world, preventing, and managing heart disease remains a major challenge. More worryingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has made people living with CVD even more vulnerable and has put even more barriers to their access to care.

Yet, in every crisis there is an opportunity to start afresh with new thinking. Devastating as it has been globally and for people living with CVD, the pandemic made clear the importance of health data in navigating complexity and emergencies. Data does not live in a vacuum, however, nor does it speak for itself. We need skills, understanding, and governance to make it meaningful and impactful for heart health, especially in the post-COVID world when we expect a tsunami of CVD.

To that end, the World Heart Federation (WHF) is developing the World Heart Observatory as its contribution to the data-driven future of the cardiovascular and wider health community. The Observatory will collate and curate multiple CVD data initiatives, including from WHO, the Global Burden of Disease, and from the WHF national society members, into actionable knowledge for cardiologists, patient organizations, health advocates, researchers, and industry. Its added value lies in identifying gaps and research needs, building capacity in data curation, analysis, and dissemination, and providing a debate forum in relation to global CVD data. The Observatory's open-access online platform will be launched by the end of 2021.

Data governance will be at the core of the Observatory's work, partnerships, and impact. We, therefore, welcome the opportunity to participate in and support WHO's Health Data Governance Summit as the forum for greater international collaboration on data governance and a platform to encourage consensus around health data as a global public good.

The World Heart Federation is an umbrella organization, in official relations with the World Health Organization, representing the entire cardiovascular community through its +200 Members in more than 100 countries. Since 2018, WHF has been making digital health and health data one of its key areas of work across its programmes, [publications](#), [events](#), and [campaigns](#). Learn more about WHF and the impact it is making at <https://world-heart-federation.org/>.