# Participant Information Sheet

*One-to-one semi-structured interviews*

**Date that data collection will start:**

20 November 2025

**Project Title**

Process-based understanding of value formation in digital healthcare

Kia ora,

You are invited to take part in a research interview about how digital health tools shape relationships, coordination and value formation across the healthcare ecosystem, with the aim of developing a process-based understanding that supports ecosystem well-being in Aotearoa New Zealand. This study is conducted by Yanruo (Nora) Zhang, a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Marketing and International Business, BEL Faculty, Auckland University of Technology (AUT). The research team includes supervisors Professor Crystal Sheau Fen Yap and Associate Professor Anca Yallop. This project forms part of a PhD in Marketing (Digital Health Marketing).

**What is the purpose of this research?**

Digital health tools refer to digital systems, platforms, applications and devices used in health services to support communication, care delivery, coordination, monitoring, decision-making, self-management, service implementation or evaluation. Examples include, but are not limited to, telehealth platforms, electronic health records, patient portals, digital referral systems, clinical decision-support or AI-supported tools, wearable devices, remote monitoring systems, digital self-management applications, and tools with gamified or immersive functions (VR/AR/MR/XR). This study examines how these tools influence relationships and day-to-day work across the health system, and what this means for value co-created or co-destroyed in care. The aim is to build a process-based understanding that can support more coordinated, equitable and sustainable ecosystem well-being in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We seek the real-world experiences of healthcare practitioners in New Zealand, including clinicians and allied health professionals, healthcare organisational representatives, policy and governance actors, digital health technology specialists, and digital health researchers or academic specialists. Please note that no ethnicity data will be collected in this study. Māori perspectives will be represented through purposive engagement and culturally appropriate research practices, rather than through the collection of individual ethnicity information. Your insights on adoption, use and implementation challenges will help identify what enables or hinders collaboration and care. Your participation is an important contribution to practice-relevant knowledge about digital healthcare. The findings will contribute to a doctoral thesis in Digital Health Marketing and may be used for academic publications and presentations.

**How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You have expressed interest in this research through a recruitment notice or professional network. You are invited to participate because you meet the study requirements below.

General prerequisites (apply to all groups):

- Adults aged 25-65, based in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Healthcare practitioners (that is, all healthcare stakeholders other than patients).
- Recent involvement with digital health tools in the past 24 months (use, implementation, management, design/strategy, or policy/decision-making).

- Able to take part online or in-person in English and willing to provide informed consent.

Role categories:

a. Healthcare professionals (clinicians): Staff members (e.g., doctors, nurses, allied health, social workers in healthcare settings) directly involved in delivering care in New Zealand within the past 24 months, particularly those using digital health tools.

b. Healthcare organisation representatives: People from hospitals, healthcare organisations, or relevant non-profits who have developed, implemented, or managed digital technologies in New Zealand healthcare services within the past 24 months.

c. Healthcare policy, governance or strategic decision-making actors: People involved in shaping, funding, governing, commissioning or making strategic decisions about digital health services or digital technology integration in New Zealand healthcare within the past 24 months.

d. Digital health technology specialists: Specialists involved in digital health technology design, digital strategy, technical implementation, system support, vendor services, platform development or technology integration for New Zealand healthcare services within the past 24 months.

e. Digital health researchers or academic specialists: Researchers or academic specialists who have been directly involved in digital health research, evaluation, implementation, service improvement or evidence generation related to New Zealand healthcare services within the past 24 months.

Individuals who have a direct line-management, supervisory, or assessment relationship with any member of the research team are not eligible to take part.

If these points apply and you would like to take part, please contact the researcher using the details provided in this sheet. Participation is voluntary, and written consent will be requested before scheduling. With your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed for accuracy.

### How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you wish to take part, please contact the primary researcher at nora.zhang@aut.ac.nz to confirm your interest. You will be sent a Consent Form with this Participant Information Sheet. To agree, please sign (electronic signature or typed name is acceptable) and email the consent form back to the same address. An interview time will then be arranged. At the start of the interview, consent will be reconfirmed. With your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed for accuracy.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice), and whether you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You can withdraw from the study at any time by informing the researcher. If you choose to withdraw from the study, you can ask for information collected up until your withdrawal to be deleted, unless you withdraw after the study analyses have been undertaken, in which case removal of your data may no longer be possible.

### What will my participation involve?

Once you agree to participate, we will schedule a one-to-one semi-structured interview at a time that suits you and in your preferred format, either online via Microsoft Teams or in person. If online, a Teams link will be sent, and you may join from any private location, with camera optional. If in person, we will meet in a quiet, accessible public venue where conversation can remain private.

The discussion will invite practical examples of your recent involvement with digital health tools (for example, adoption and day-to-day use), and how these tools affect roles, routines, coordination, decision-making, collaboration, benefits/risks and equity considerations, as well as suggestions for better design and implementation. With your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded for accuracy and the researcher may take brief notes. You will be asked for limited background information (e.g., current role, organisation type, years of experience). No patient-identifiable information will be sought, and reports will use pseudonyms with organisations and individuals not named.

There is no randomisation and no clinical tasks. As a token of appreciation for your time, a store voucher will be provided electronically to your nominated email address after the interview.

**What are the benefits?**

Participation contributes directly to a process-based account of how digital health tools shape everyday interactions and value formation in care. By sharing concrete episodes from practice, participants help identify when and how value co-creation is enabled, where value co-destruction arises, and what interactional conditions support recovery toward more productive collaboration. For the health sector, the study will generate practice-grounded evidence about roles, routines, coordination and decision-making in digitally mediated services. The intention is to clarify mechanisms that foster effective, fair and joined-up working across clinical, organisational, policy and technology settings, thereby supporting ecosystem well-being in Aotearoa New Zealand. For the research community, the project advances knowledge at the intersection of service theory and digital health by offering a rigorous, empirically grounded understanding of value co-creation and co-destruction over time. Findings will inform a doctoral thesis in Digital Health Marketing and will be disseminated through academic publications and presentations.

**What are the costs?**

Participation involves one 45–60 minute interview, held online via Microsoft Teams or in person at a mutually convenient public venue. For online sessions, no travel or parking costs apply; you will need a device with internet access, and any data/connection charges are your responsibility. For in-person sessions, any travel or parking costs you incur are not reimbursed. In recognition of your time, a store voucher will be provided after the interview. Each interview is conducted individually, and your responses will be kept private and confidential.

**Will the results of the study be published?**

The results of this research may be published in peer-reviewed, academic journals. Results will also be presented during conferences or seminars to wider professional and academic communities. You will not be identifiable in any publication.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

There is a very minimal chance of any discomfort. We can assure you that the questions are non-invasive as we do not seek a level of detail that may identify you or create discomfort. The timings of the interviews can be adjusted based on your convenience. Participation is voluntary, and if for any reason you feel uncomfortable with the conversation, you can discontinue/withdraw from the research project at any time prior to the study's completion without any consequences.

AUT's Counselling and Mental Health Services will also be provided. AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call (09) 921 9292.
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Participant Information Sheet.

*You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health.*

**What will happen to information about me?**

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Identifiable information, such as your name and contact details for scheduling, together with limited background descriptors relevant to the research (for example, your current role, organisation type, area of practice, years of experience, and recent involvement with digital health tools), will be collected. These details are optional, and you may choose not to answer any questions you are uncomfortable with.

This project does not collect ethnicity information. In this study, participants' ethnicity will not be collected, as the research focuses on the interaction between digital tools and health system processes rather than on individual-level health outcomes. The study is designed to explore system-wide dynamics, relationships, and value co-creation/co-destruction across the health ecosystem.

However, we acknowledge that ethnicity is a critical consideration for Māori health providers, practitioners, and IT developers. To address this, the study will ensure that perspectives of Māori participants and organisations are captured through purposive engagement and participant selection, rather than through the collection of individual ethnicity data. This approach allows the research to be inclusive of Māori viewpoints while respecting participants' privacy and maintaining the study's process-oriented focus. We will also remain attentive to culturally appropriate practices and ethical considerations when interpreting findings and reporting results, ensuring that Māori contributions are accurately and respectfully represented.

Your responses and insights will remain private and confidential. Your identity will not be disclosed to anyone except the primary researcher and the co-investigators. To ensure that privacy and confidentiality are respected, your name will be replaced with a pseudonym and a role code (e.g., P01-Clinician, P02-Policy), and contact information will not appear in any report. By signing the consent form, you agree to the use of your information as stated in this Participant Information Sheet and that identifiable information will only be disclosed outside of the study with your permission or as required by law. Because this study involves participants from relatively small and specialised professional networks, only limited confidentiality can be offered. While every effort will be made to de-identify responses, there remains a small possibility that participants could be indirectly identifiable.

You will also be provided with a transcript of your interview (or relevant transcript excerpts) and asked to review it to ensure it accurately reflects what you have shared. If you notice any inaccuracies or wish to clarify your statements, you can inform the researcher, and the necessary corrections will be made to ensure your information is accurately represented. Participants will not be identified in any research outputs, such as conference papers or journal articles. If quotes are included in these outputs, only role-coded pseudonyms (e.g., P07-Clinician, P14-Technology Specialist) will be used to protect your identity.

All data and consent forms will be securely stored in a password-protected digital repository under AUT's control, with access limited to the primary researcher. These files will remain protected for six years, after which they will be permanently deleted to ensure confidentiality. If you have any concerns or complaints, contact details for the researcher and the research team are provided for your convenience.

### What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You can take your time to decide whether you wish to participate in the research. However, it would be appreciated if you could respond within two weeks from the date the invitation is sent.

### Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

On the Consent Form, you may tick the box showing your interest in receiving feedback on the research's results. A result synopsis will be emailed to you once the study is complete.

### What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Crystal Sheau Fen Yap, crystal.yap@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 5800.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, *ethics@aut.ac.nz*, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

### Who do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Participant Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

***Researcher Contact Details:***

Yanruo (Nora) Zhang, Auckland University of Technology, nora.zhang@aut.ac.nz

Professor Crystal Sheau Fen Yap, Auckland University of Technology, crystal.yap@aut.ac.nz

Associate Professor Anca Yallop, Auckland University of Technology, anca.yallop@aut.ac.nz

***Project Supervisor Contact Details:***

Professor Crystal Sheau Fen Yap, Auckland University of Technology, crystal.yap@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 5800

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *11 November 2025*, AUTEC Reference number *25/300*.**