Data4Life survey shows willingness to donate health data to research increases with COVID-19 pandemic

Potsdam, May 12, 2020. Donating health data to (medical) research remains a sensitive issue during the current COVID-19 pandemic, but willingness to donate is increasing, especially when done securely and to combat COVID-19. Data4Life, the nonprofit organization financed by the Hasso Plattner Foundation, recently conducted a survey of 5,002 people in Germany. The results show that almost two thirds (65%) of all respondents are open to donating their health data (pulse rate, fever, pre-existing illnesses) and movement data (location, distance measurements) to COVID-19 research. Over three quarters (77%) of those who would make their data available would do so to slow the spread of COVID-19, while just under two thirds (65%) hope to accelerate the development of a COVID-19 vaccine. Only 26% of all respondents would donate data to relax COVID-19 lockdown measures, making it the least important reason among survey participants. In comparison to other respondents, senior citizens and childless households are generally more willing to donate data.

An even larger number of respondents support exchanging medical data digitally with doctors and research institutions. Primary goals include improving treatment and diagnosis, detecting diseases earlier, and making improvements to the health system.

"By sharing health data, citizens can significantly accelerate medical research and notably improve healthcare," commented Professor Erwin Böttinger, head of the Digital Health Center at the Hasso Plattner Institute in Potsdam in response to the survey results."Now it's important to develop solutions that protect sensitive data to the highest standards of security and enable people to donate data in an independent and informed manner," added Christian Weiß, CEO of Data4Life.

The representative survey of 5,002 people in Germany (conducted between April 20 and April 30, 2020) shows an increase in the population's willingness to improve the situation, speed up research, or contribute by other means if data security and data protection are guaranteed.

Graphs and further details about the survey can be found here: https://www.data4life.care/en/press/

About Data4Life

D4L data4life gGmbH (www.data4life.care) is a nonprofit organization with over 100 employees at 4 locations, originating as a research project at the Hasso-Plattner-Institut für Digital Engineering gGmbH (under the name Gesundheitscloud) and funded by the Hasso Plattner Foundation. Data4Life wants to make a meaningful contribution to improving healthcare by developing and operating IT infrastructures and digital services for the management and analysis of health data and by applying algorithms to the research of diseases and evaluation of treatment methods. In March 2020, Data4Life developed the CovApp (covapp.charite.de) for and in close cooperation with the Berlin Charité to help people deal with COVID-19. Data4Life was certified in July 2019 by the German Federal Office for Information Security (BSI) as ISO 27001 compliant on the basis of "IT-Grundschutz." D4L data4life gGmbH was founded at the end of 2017 with headquarters in Potsdam, Germany. The managing director is Christian-Cornelius Weiß.

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