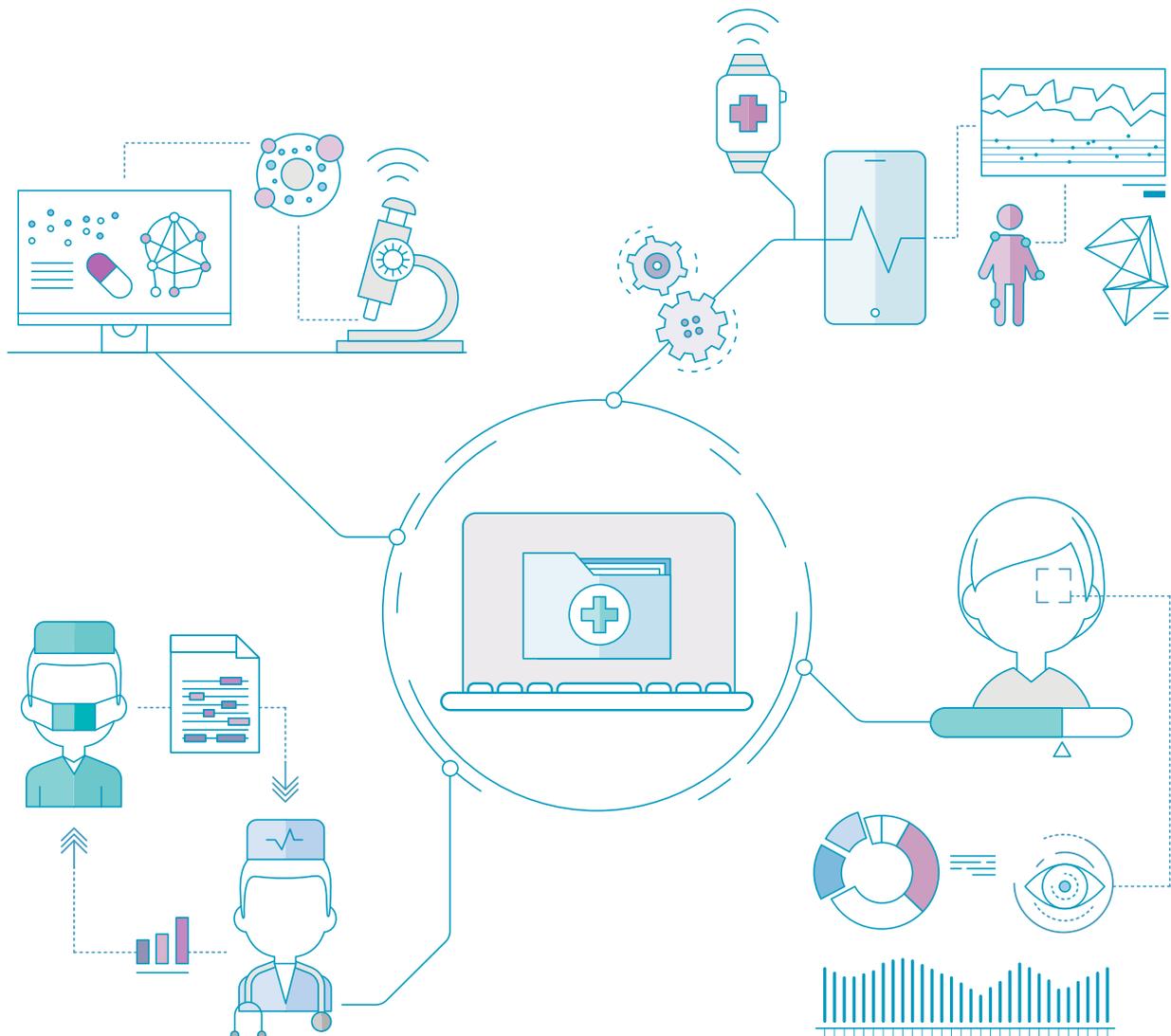# imec

ehealthmonitor 2019

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

The eHealthmonitor 2019 is a two-phased mixed-methods study. For the first phase questionnaires were created and distributed among six target groups, namely general practitioners, specialists, pharmacists, nurses, nursing assistants and citizens. The second phase of the study, namely focus groups with the six target groups, had to be postponed till September 2020 due to the COVID-19 global health crisis. As a result, the following section focuses solely on the research methodology of the questionnaires.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The focus of the questionnaires was on the use of available eHealth services and the experience of the services. The development of the questionnaires was an iterative process, with internal and external feedback loops, meetings with professional organizations and a test phase. In addition, we took inspiration from the existing 2017 eHealthmonitor questionnaire for General Practitioners in Flanders and the 2018 Nictiz/Nivel eHealthmonitor questionnaire. The final questionnaires incorporated open and closed questions, which allowed for a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of the data.

DATA COLLECTION

Several approaches, on different levels, were adopted for the recruitment of respondents. For instance, the cabinet of the federal and regional health ministers and the RIZIV/INAMI communicated through their different channels and sent out a press release that was picked up by specialized press. Also, an invitation to participate was sent to all Belgian health professionals via the eHealthBox. Furthermore, we mobilized the help of many regional and federal health organizations, such as our project partners, unions, professional associations and interest groups to spread the questionnaires to their members. Finally, we reached the citizens through commercial panels such as imec.Maakdatmee and Bilendi Belgium.

The questionnaires were distributed digitally and were accessible from the end of October 2019 till the end of December 2019.

DATA CLEANING

General practitioners and specialists had to have been involved in the treatment and/or diagnosis of patients in the past year to be eligible to participate. The other health professionals (pharmacists, nurses and care practitioners) had to have been directly involved with patient care in the past year. Healthcare professionals that did not meet these criteria or came from other disciplines (e.g. physiotherapists, dentists) were asked to complete the citizen questionnaire.

It was decided that partially completed surveys would not be removed. During the data cleaning process unusual and/or inconsistent respondents were removed by verifying open questions. It must be noted that various analyses in the questionnaire contain a much lower number of respondents, because of the aforementioned reasons (non-removal of incomplete responses) and because not everyone answers each question. For this reason, the N for each particular question is provided under the table/graph.

SAMPLE

The obtained sample of each target group of healthcare professionals was compared to the national statistics of healthcare practitioners 2019[1] for representativeness by region, age and sex. For the citizens the obtained sample was compared to the statistics of the Belgian population for representativeness by region, age, sex and education level[2]. For each profession as well as for the citizens, detailed information of their demographics is provided. In addition, disclaimers are added to the reports where the percentages of groups in our sample do not accurately represent the size of this group in society.

1   Steinberg, P. (2019). Jaarstatistieken met betrekking tot de beoefenaars van gezondheidszorgberoepen in België. Cel Planning van het Aanbod van de Gezondheidszorgberoepen.
2   Statbel (Algemene Directie Statistiek – Statistics Belgium). Kerncijfers Belgische bevolking 2019. FOD Economie, KMO, Middenstand en Energie.

Recruiting exclusively via a digital questionnaire might limit the external validity of the results. However, the primary audience of the eHealthmonitor are people that are connected to the internet and therefore have the possibility to access the questionnaire. The findings give an indication of the trends, barriers and possibilities with regard to eHealth in Belgium, even though the survey sample is not representative of the entire Belgian population.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The quantitative data collected via the questionnaires is analysed using SPSS Statistics version 26. Due to the sample sizes, very small differences often still reached statistical significance[3]. The findings presented represent the total sample and cover the Belgian trends and attitudes. However, when distinctive regional variations are noticed these are pointed out.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

For each target group the most relevant open-ended questions with regards to the services were selected (e.g. the services with the lowest usage, the services with the highest dissatisfaction) and the feedback question were analyzed for all target groups using MAXQDA 2020 software. Table 1 gives detailed information of the different questions analyzed per target group.

Each selected question was open coded, in an inductive manner, and once saturation was reached (no new info was detected) the codes were transformed into categories by means of focused coding. The main categories are reported in the report.

	QUESTIONS			
	Use of eHealth services	Satisfaction with eHealth services	Feedback question	Satisfaction with health portals
TARGET GROUP				
General practitioners (in training)	Digital medication schedule MyHandicap eAttest	Digital medication schedule MyHandicap SumEHR	✓	✕
Specialists (in training)	✕	✕	✓	✕
Pharmacists (in training)	UPPAD Digital medication schedule RAOTD	Digital medication schedule Chapter IV Recip-e	✓	✕
Nurses (in training)	UPPAD Manage eHealth certificate E-Birth	N/A	✓	✕
Nursing assistants (in training)	✕	BelRAI 2.0	✓	✕
Citizens	✕	Digital medication schedule SumEHR Laboratory results Digital images	✓	Mijngezondheid/ masanté MHV RSW RSB/BGN Website CoZo App CoZo

Table 1. Overview of questions per target group for the qualitative analysis

3   Lantz, B. (2013). The large sample size fallacy. Scandinavian journal of caring sciences, 27(2), 487-492.