
INTERVIEW: EIT HEALTH



With Cristina Bescos

EIT Health is a European Union-backed network of health innovators that promotes entrepreneurship and innovation across the healthcare sector. Its mission is to foster collaboration among businesses, researchers, and educators to create cutting-edge solutions and technologies that address pressing healthcare challenges. As EIT Health's Director of Innovation, I oversee the organisation's innovation initiatives, accelerate the implementation of new healthcare solutions, and promote the broader adoption of digital health across Europe.

Why is the inclusion of women in the health entrepreneurship's 'Knowledge Triangle' (business, research, and education) so important?

The inclusion of women in health entrepreneurship's business, research, and education is crucial because it ensures all perspectives are considered when developing healthcare solutions: if 50% of the population is not participating in the development processes, the capacity of innovation is limited. This equity can lead to more comprehensive, effective, and tailored products and services that cater to the unique needs of women and the broader population, particularly considering that most of the elderly population consists of women. Addressing their specific needs can ensure a more inclusive approach to healthcare solutions. Moreover, research has shown that gender-diverse teams are more likely to address health problems affecting both men and women. In contrast, male-dominated teams may focus primarily on male-oriented conditions. Examples like [MiMARK](#), an EIT Health incubated start-up targeting female-specific health issues, are becoming increasingly successful.

How does EIT Health advocate for this?

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EIT Health advocates for the inclusion of women in health entrepreneurship through various initiatives and programmes, such as the [Women Entrepreneurship Bootcamp](#). This programme is designed to support early-stage, female-led or co-led healthcare start-ups by connecting them with a network of mentors, providing training, and offering resources to help them succeed, especially in access to private funding and negotiations with venture capitalists. Additionally, EIT Health encourages gender balance in its accelerator programmes, promoting the growth of women-led health start-ups.

How can we all get involved and improve outcomes for women in health entrepreneurship?

To get involved and improve outcomes for women in health entrepreneurship, individuals and organisations can actively support and invest in women-led healthcare start-ups, promote diversity and inclusion within the healthcare sector, and advocate for policies that create a level playing field for all entrepreneurs. It is also important to have female references so the new generation can see themselves reflected and feel attracted to more STEM and entrepreneurship careers. Furthermore, mentoring and networking opportunities can be offered to female entrepreneurs to help them navigate the challenges they may face in the industry. By creating an inclusive and supportive environment, we can foster the growth of women in health entrepreneurship and encourage the development of innovative solutions that benefit everyone.

What does the future of EIT Health look like in relation to women's health?

The future of EIT Health looks promising, with a focus on fostering diversity and inclusion in the healthcare sector, particularly in areas such as FemTech. As the market for [FemTech](#) continues to grow^[1], EIT Health aims to support and nurture start-ups in this field by providing resources, mentorship, and accelerator programmes that cater to their unique needs. By championing innovations that address women's health needs and supporting the involvement of women in health entrepreneurship, EIT Health will continue to play a vital role in transforming the healthcare landscape across Europe.

[1] <https://eithealth.eu/news-article/femtech-revolution-which-start-ups-are-transforming-womens-health/>