

Working to reduce bias and ensure ethical data use in digital mental healthcare

BARCELONA, SPAIN, November 10, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Koa Health, a leading global provider of [digital-first mental healthcare](#), today announced the results of their 2022 external ethics audit, conducted by [Eticas](#), an industry leader in ethics oversight and algorithm auditing.

With a vision of mental health for all, Koa Health is deeply committed to behaving ethically—specifically regarding data usage and reducing bias across our solutions. Both organizations and consumers care deeply about not just a solution's efficacy but also its accessibility, freedom from bias, and trustworthiness. Very few are interested in another difficult-to-use tool, even fewer want to use a product that's not inclusive, and no one wants to hand over their personal data to a service provider that doesn't offer adequate protection.

"For mental health support to be effective, it must be trustworthy—as a psychiatrist, I have first-hand experience in how challenging it can be to earn and maintain people's trust so that you can provide them with the resources and help they need," said Dr. Oliver Harrison, CEO of Koa Health, "That's why it's absolutely crucial that digital mental health providers publicly commit to and abide by ethical standards."

So to ensure ethical behavior, not just ethical intentions, Koa Health undergoes regular ethics audits to ensure compliance and progress, and publishes results on the Koa Health web.

"Eticas is committed to helping digital mental health providers like Koa Health ensure that the technology behind their solutions is not only effective but also ethical," said Dr. Gemma Galdon, CEO and Founder at Eticas, "Regular audits and oversight help companies to ensure algorithms effectively limit common biases and the secure and ethical treatment of user data. As these systems increasingly influence and form a part of our lives, this is more necessary than ever before."

Koa Health's 2022 external ethics audit reveals a [24% improvement](#) since the previous year's audit. This raised the score for Koa Health's flagship mental wellbeing app, Koa Foundations, which achieved perfect ratings in several categories, including reduction of bias in measurement and data visualization. Improvements were seen across many categories, and Koa Health has created an action plan based on recommendations by Eticas to continue to improve year over year.

"When supporting people's mental health and handling their sensitive, personal data, earning and maintaining their trust is essential," said David Whewell, Chief Technology and Data Officer and Head of Ethics at Koa Health, "For digital mental health providers, that means treating data securely and ethically and ensuring your offering is accessible, bias-free and inclusive. We welcome the results of Eticas' audit and will continue our program of continuous improvement around our products, their inclusivity and our duty of care."

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About Koa Health

Koa Health provides an integrated approach to care that delivers mental health for everyone, whether they prefer digital-first care or would benefit from clinical services delivered by a human. Available to more than 3 million users worldwide, Koa Health addresses the full continuum of mental health needs— from prevention to treatment.

Backed by leading investors such as Morningside, Ancora Finance Group, Wellington Partners Life Sciences, and MTIP, Koa Health leverages deep clinical expertise, research, and technology to deliver effective and accessible care that adapts to users' unique circumstances, leading to lasting behavior change and positive health outcomes across the full continuum of mental health.

With operations in Barcelona, the US and the UK, Koa Health partners with leading clinicians and academics, including Massachusetts General Hospital, University College of London, the London School of Economics, and Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust.

For more information, please contact us at press@koahealth.com

About Eticas

A pioneer in the fields of ethics oversight and algorithm audits, Eticas has carried out adversarial audits of systems used by YouTube, TikTok, Uber, and the Spanish Government. The world's first algorithmic auditing company, Eticas, has worked for major players in both the public and private sectors. International institutions like the UN, the European Commission, the OECD, and the InterAmerican Bank of Development have entrusted Eticas to audit and oversee the ethical and responsible use of their technology.

Founded by Dr. Gemma Galdon in 2012, Eticas has been concerned with protecting people and the environment in technological processes since its inception. From video surveillance and customs controls to the gender and age gap in digital environments, in 2021, Eticas made its algorithm audit methodology public as part of its mission to make better technology exist for a better world, consolidating itself as a world reference in algorithmic audits.

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