

Residency Report

Project Title: *Human-Machine-Medicine: Ethical Aspects of AI-Assisted Healthcare*

Residency Dates: May 20 – June 1, 2025

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I have a longstanding connection to Estonia and have visited the country several times in the past, though this was my first time in the Pärnu area. As someone working on the ethical aspects of digital health and medicine, I've long been fascinated by Estonia's advanced digital ecosystem – especially in healthcare – and have actively sought opportunities to connect with researchers in the region. So I was more than happy when I received the privilege to spend time at Susimetsa Philosophicum in May 2025 to work on my current research project. For almost two weeks, I had the rewarding experience of being alone at Susimetsa, which gave me the focus and solitude needed to think, research, read, and write deeply.

During my stay, I worked on a research article examining how generative AI, such as large language models (LLMs), is reshaping the doctor-patient relationship. My project focused on three ethical dimensions of this transformation: automation bias in clinical decision-making, responsibility gaps arising from AI autonomy, and the codification of social biases into medical AI systems.

The research was also historically motivated. I explored the small but highly insightful debate that took place in the 1970s and 1980s around the ethical implications of computers and expert systems in medicine. Many of the concerns raised then resonate with today's discussions around medical AI. A key question guiding my work was whether current developments introduce genuinely new ethical challenges, or whether they amplify patterns we've seen before.

The residency provided the perfect setting to engage deeply with these questions. I was able to conduct foundational research, begin drafting manuscripts, and now plan to develop the material further into a journal article - or perhaps even a short book... The peaceful surroundings, the exceptional library, and the quietude of Susimetsa offered exactly the kind of environment I needed to focus and reflect.

The library itself - and the chance to access resources in biomedical ethics (mainly German/English) - was a unique opportunity. Had I known in advance what treasures were available there, I could have saved myself a bag full of books! Being surrounded by precisely the texts and references I needed made an enormous difference. Combined with the possibility to connect with researchers in my field, this created an extraordinary foundation for my work, one that few other places could offer.

I am more than grateful for what Theda Rehbock together with Margit Sutrop have left to the scientific community. Although I never knew Prof. Rehbock personally, our paths crossed indirectly in the past, and I was familiar with her work. To benefit from the intellectual space she and Margit created was both humbling and, in a quiet way,

intimate. The feeling of being an intruder in such a academic space faded quickly as I engaged with the materials and ideas that connect us as scholars. Finding those resources – and the atmosphere they helped create – gave me a strong sense of “Geborgenheit”, a groundedness and intellectual belonging that stayed with me throughout my time there.

Beyond research and writing, the residency also allowed me to connect with researchers in Estonia and the wider Baltic region. A highlight was my visit to the University of Tartu, where I gave a talk on the ethics of large language models in healthcare. Estonia’s digital infrastructure – particularly in the health sector – offers a compelling context that continues to inform and refine the ethical questions I explore in my work.

I am especially thankful to Margit Sutrop, whose guidance and generosity made a deep impression on me. I’m also very grateful to Anu and her family for their warm hospitality and thoughtful care of this unique space. The experience has enriched my thinking and left me hoping to return one day.



6 am at Susimetsa Philosophicum - quiet minds, rising light. May 2025.