Does Telehealth promote self-care?

A qualitative study examining the experience of older people and nurses using telehealth for long-term condition management

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Self-management

• “Self-care and self-management are particularly important for people with long-term conditions” - NICE (2012)

• **Self-management** → Patients support their own care

• **Five core self-management skills**
  • Problem solving
  • Decision making
  • Resource utilization
  • Forming of a patient/health care provider partnership
  • Taking action
Self-management and telehealth

• Evidence of outcomes associated with telehealth is mixed

• MALT case studies
  • Potential of telehealth to promote self-management
  • Nurses report improved self-management among patients
  • Concerns about patient dependence on telehealth

“You’re trying to make them autonomous with their own health condition and I think that sometimes telehealth might take that away from patients and they would be quite happy for that.” (Community Matron)
Telehealth service

Collection of physiological data
- weight, blood pressure, oxygen level, heart rate, symptoms

Care delivery process
- Technology and nurse support – management of alerts
Methods

• 40 interviews with telehealth users (12 carers contributed)
• Used telehealth for 2 months to 3 years
• COPD & CHF
• Experience and perspectives on using telehealth
• Thematic analysis using Nvivo+ a priori themes from literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient Sample Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female, n</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHF</td>
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<tr>
<td>COPD and CHF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-morbidities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living with spouse</td>
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<td>Telehealth duration</td>
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Initial Themes

- Managing symptoms
- Managing medication
- Managing vital signs
- Managing telehealth
- Managing lifestyle
- Managing healthcare utilization
- Managing emotions
- Learning about condition
- Decision making

Support from others
Main Themes

- Independent health management
- Clinically supported health management
- Impact of telehealth on health behaviours

Decision-making
Independent health management
“See before what I used to do if the machine wasn’t working I have a book upstairs which I write everything in…. For my own benefit. And then you can see by looking back if that’s gone up or that’s not right. If my weights gone up, like it was 77 yesterday, then 76.5, so it’s coming down a bit. So you know then that you’re on the right track. I want it down to 75..” (Telehealth Patient)
Clinically supported health management
Clinically supported health management

Reassurance

“If any of the readings are wrong, either too low or too high, then the nurse who picks up the phone at the other end rings me back up and tells me.”

Dependence

“I’d hate it if they took it off me, I really wouldn’t like it. It’s like having a nurse every day. I really would be upset if they took it away and it’s possible isn’t it?”

Equipment and service

“In reality it is not a stand-alone machine, it is part of a package the human interface is the nurse ... it's a gateway to your nursing staff.”
Impact of telehealth on health behaviours
Impact of telehealth on health behaviours

32 patients were asked if telehealth helped them to self-manage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SORT OF</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO/NOT REALLY</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DON’T KNOW</td>
<td>3%</td>
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**Condition Management**

“I know when my temperature for example starts dropping that I am probably coming down with a chest infection or something. So that way, I can sort of ring the matron and try and get on the antibiotics before the chest infection kicks in.”

**Healthy lifestyle**

“It makes you think more about what you are eating and what you put inside you.”

**Decision making**

“So if I did the telehealth nice and my oxygen levels were 86 I knew I’d got a problem… I’d go to the doctors. So it does er..it does teach me”.
Telehealth does promote self-care but can also create dependence

Self-care

Dependence
Telehealth facilitates supported self-management

• Schermer’s (2009) three degrees of self-management in telecare

• Compliant self-management
  1. The patient as an extension of the professional - taking measurements
  2. Patient as proto-professional - interpretation of measurements and action based on medical advice

• Concordant self-management
  3. The patient independent of the practitioner uses telehealth to make decisions
• The model of supported self-management was welcomed by people with COPD and CHF
  • Increased understanding and awareness of symptoms and condition
  • Increased confidence in ability to manage condition and health

People with COPD & CHF

Combination of self-monitoring and remote monitoring by HCP

Better management of symptoms
Improved quality of life for patients
THANK YOU