Developing and evaluating an interactive app to support self-care among older persons receiving home care

av

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Akademisk avhandling

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Abstract


The proportion of older persons worldwide is growing. With older age, complex health problems may occur and the need for home care increases. To support older persons to maintain health and self-care, innovative ways need to be developed. The aim of the project was to develop and evaluate an interactive app among older persons receiving home care. The project had several phases: i) to define and understand the problem ii) develop the intervention iii) develop and optimise evaluation. Qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. Data were collected through a scoping review, interviews with healthcare experts, older persons and nursing assistants (study I); interviews with older persons (studies II, III); focus groups with homecare nurses (study II). Questionnaires at baseline, end of intervention and 6-month follow-up; with instruments to assess aspects of health, health literacy, self-care, and a study specific question regarding sense of security were used (studies III-IV). Logged data from reported health concerns, alerts, and notes were collected (study IV). Data were analysed using qualitative content analysis (study I), thematic analysis (study II), qualitative content analysis with directed approach (study III) and descriptive and inferential statistics (studies III, IV). Results: Important aspects for health and self-care from the older persons’ perspectives were described as: frame of mind, having relationships and social activities, physical ability and concerns, and maintaining self-care (I). These results were included in the app as questions with self-care advice, graphs and alerts to homecare nurses. The app use was described as an enabler for learning (II). The older persons showed improved communicative and critical health literacy at the 6-month follow-up (IV). They described an increased sense of security (II and III), which decreased at the 6-month follow-up (III). They expressed increased self-confidence (II) and support in self-care, but reported a decrease in self-care ability at the 6-month follow-up (III). App usage was high, with the health concern pain triggering the most alerts (IV). Their aspects of health were unchanged at the three assessments points (IV). In this context using an app may increase older persons’ participation in their care. The results show that for some older persons, an app can be implemented as a tool for support in conventional home care.

Keywords: health concerns, mHealth, older persons, self-care

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