

Exploring User Views on Telemedicine to Support Cancer Patients: Insights from Focus Group Discussions in the Context of the eCAN Joint Action

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Abstract. This paper provides insights into user perspectives on telemedicine for cancer based on Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) within the eCAN Joint Action. Two FGDs centered on the eCAN mobile app and the eCAN dashboard, aiming to confirm user acceptance and understand cancer patients' and healthcare professionals' views. The findings highlight the importance of personalized deployment of telemedicine technologies to meet the specific needs of end users.

Keywords. Telemedicine, end-user perspectives, focus group discussions

1. Introduction

The eCAN Joint Action² aims to provide a framework of recommendations for the integration of teleconsultation and telemonitoring in healthcare systems. Recognizing the pivotal role of user engagement in designing effective telemedicine solutions, two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted. Whereas the first FGD focused on the eCAN mobile app, engaging patients, the second FGD revolved around the eCAN dashboard web app, involving healthcare professionals (HCPs).

2. Methods

The FGDs took place through an online platform [1-3]. For participant selection, a sampling method [4] was employed, considering factors such as language, availability,

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and positive feedback from previous participatory activities. The FGDs were organized in several phases.

3. Results

With the active involvement of patients and HCPs, both FGDs confirmed that the two eCAN solutions were well-accepted. According to the patients involved in the first FGD, it is crucial to involve users with different levels of digital literacy, just as the eCAN pilot participants. Patients prefer visuals over numerical data and suggest adding some features to the eCAN mobile app, which could potentially support them (e.g. a notebook). Concerns were raised regarding the potential risks of the use of ehealth apps, e.g., the handling of bad news and information overload. According to HCPs, high adaptability, immediate technical support, secondary use of patient data, personalized design, and feedback from pilot participants are very important. Despite these benefits, HCPs concluded that the dashboard should be used as a supplementary tool to their conventional clinical monitoring approaches.

4. Discussion

Comparing our work with previous studies [5,6], it is evident that there is a need for personalized design of telemedicine solutions. Moreover, further elaboration on critical aspects in the medical informatics domain (e.g., cybersecurity) is necessary.

5. Conclusions

Overall, valuable insights were gained from the two FGDs on the use of the developed eCAN technologies providing a useful basis for further elaboration on the usability of telemonitoring solutions in Europe.

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