

Designing an eHealth service to meet heart failure patients` post-hospital self-management needs – A co-design study

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Background: Heart failure (HF) is a chronic disease which require day-to-day self-management by those affected. Transitioning home following hospital discharge may be stressful for HF patients and many struggle to perform recommended self-management. A promising resource that may promote self-management in this transition phase is eHealth. However, to ensure that eHealth services are developed in response to end-users` needs, a user-centered co-design approach is suggested. Co-design is a method of designing better health care services by discovering and sharing knowledge between different groups of stakeholders. By involving different stakeholders and exploring their views throughout the development phase of eHealth interventions, acceptable, user-friendly, and feasible solutions may emerge.

Objectives: To explore different stakeholders` perspectives on HF patients` post-hospital self-management needs and investigate how an eHealth service best could be designed to meet those needs.

Methods: A qualitative co-design was used. A total of twenty-seven interviews were conducted with 10 patients with HF, four registered nurses and 13 general practitioners. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Findings: The analysis resulted in three themes: 1) Expecting eHealth to provide information and personal advice. 2) Expecting eHealth to be comprehensible and supportive. 3) Expecting eHealth to promote communication with health care professionals.

Conclusion: HF patients need security and self-management support after hospital discharge. eHealth can provide necessary patient education, promote communication and interaction with health professionals, and increase patient self-management competence. This study may add value to the development of eHealth interventions for patients with HF.

Keywords: Heart failure, eHealth, self-management, co-design