EDITORIAL

INNOVATIVE e-HEALTH INTERVENTIONS IN NURSING PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

INTERVENCIONES INNOVADORAS DE e-SALUD EN LA PRÁCTICA Y LA INVESTIGACIÓN DE LA ENFERMERÍA

DR. ELIN BØRØSUND, PhD, RN

DRA. CECILIE VARSJ, PhD, RN

CENTER FOR SHARED DECISION MAKING AND COLLABORATIVE CARE
RESEARCH, DIVISION OF MEDICINE, OSLO UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL, OSLO, NORWAY

E-mail: elin.borosund@rr-research.no; cecilie.vasj@rr-research.no

Along with an aging population, the prevalence and burden of lifestyle and chronic diseases, including cancer, are escalating worldwide, challenging the health care systems due to increased pressure and costs. In order to respond to this rising challenge, new models for care are needed, and the utilization of eHealth programs is strongly recommended⁽¹⁾. eHealth interventions have shown to be effective in providing patients with self-management support, enabling online patient-provider communication, monitoring and shared decision making⁽²⁾.

eHealth, defined as “health services and information delivered or enhanced through the Internet and related technologies” has great potential to support patient-centered care, in terms of improving access to care, improving quality of care, giving patients increased empowerment and control over their care and making the health care systems more efficient and cost effective^(1,3). eHealth can include, but is not limited to: mHealth (health practice supported by mobile devices), telehealth (use of telecommunications and virtual technology to deliver health care outside of traditional health-care facilities), patient portals (secure online websites that give patients access to personal health information from anywhere with an Internet connection), clinical decision support systems, self-management support systems and sensor technologies⁽⁴⁾.

As an extension of the mindset of patient-centered care, there is an important notion that eHealth represents not only a technical development, but also a state-of-mind, a way of thinking, an attitude, and a commitment for networked, global thinking, to improve health care⁽³⁾. To enable this potential, the eHealth

interventions must be anchored in evidence, and comprehensively tested in trials before implemented into routine clinical practice.

eHealth interventions can offer self-management support for patients and their providers, *e.g.* nurses, to strengthen the individuals in managing their illness and provide them the necessary skills, confidence and activities needed to cope and manage their illness on a day-to-day basis. An example of web-based self-management support is WebChoice, designed to support cancer patients in their homes between treatments and during rehabilitation. WebChoice is a multi-component program aiming at addressing patients' needs, perspectives, and experiences while they are facing the serious diagnosis of cancer and all aspects the disease brings WebChoice consists of the following modules: 1) a nurse-administered secure e-message service, 2) self-monitoring of symptoms and health problems, 3) self-management options that adapt to patients' self-reported problems, 4) cancer-related information, 5) discussion forum for cancer patients, and 6) a diary⁽⁵⁾. A series of trials have demonstrated that access to WebChoice led to reduced symptom distress, anxiety and depression among cancer patients. In addition, access to the nurse-administered secure e-message service alone contributed to reduction of depression scores. These effects were obtained with modest use of the systems, which might indicate that having access to such systems can be of great value for patients. This highlights some of the potential eHealth systems can offer.

Nurses, as the largest group of health care providers, play a core role in development, implementation and research on eHealth interventions Nurses work in all areas of the health care system, are close to the patients, provide care and follow up around the clock and have a central coordination function. It is therefore of great importance that nurses have the knowledge of, access to, add premises to, and are active users of eHealth. In the future, there will be no nursing without eHealth.

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