

Abstract

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Diabetes Self-Management: Understanding the Impact of Technological Innovation in & on the Society

In our contemporary society, mobile apps have become extensively adopted by patients and non-patients as there are countless types of mobile apps that are classified in different categories on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. This thesis examines the role of mobile health apps in everyday routine tasks of people living with chronic diseases. Mobile health apps in particular hold the promise of improving well-being, avoiding costly interventions, and broadening access to healthcare, especially in the care of people living with chronic diseases.

The role of a particular mobile health app referred to as “mySugr Logbook”, developed for assisting diabetes patients in their self-care and daily diabetes therapy has been investigated in this thesis. Literatures on the topic of health technologies and telecare technologies have been examined. Detailed focus has been on the dimensions of mobile health apps regarding how these apps are categorized in Appstores. Also the elements of gamification and the “*quantified-self*” practices have been examined. The literature section has been concluded with the notions of patients and medical knowledge.

The concept of “*heterogeneous networks*” and the concept of “*scripts*” developed from the field of Science Technology Society (STS) studies known as Actor Network Theory (ANT) have been used to think about the relations between human and non-human actors – between users and mobile health apps, between diabetes patients and “mySugr Logbook” app.

The motivation for this thesis has been grounded on two research questions. The first is *how diabetes patients use and integrate “mySugr logbook” app in their everyday routine tasks*. And the second is *which role the app plays in diabetes patients’ practices of self-care and self-treatment of the disease*. Qualitative (semi-structured) interviews have been conducted. The findings were enriching and provided answers to the research questions by describing how this health app has evolved and presenting the various features and functions of the app. How diabetes patients encountered the app and became health app users and how they integrated the app in their everyday diabetes therapy is explained. The results and the conclusions as well as future research are discussed in this thesis.