

POSTER ABSTRACT

Psychological outcomes of eCare technologies on informal carers of older people

18th International Conference on Integrated Care, Utrecht, 23-25 May 2018

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An introduction: With increasing age and longevity, the needs for long-term care and thus informal care, will increase significantly in the coming decades. The use of eCare technologies has a huge potential in solving challenges related to demographic changes and decreased care potential. However little is known about the potential of eCare technologies in relation to psychological outcomes on informal carers.

Theory/Methods: The scoping review based on Arksey & O'Malley framework, includes 17 studies published since 2013. Peer reviewed papers, written in English, investigating the use of eCare technologies in informal care and their psychological outcomes on informal carers, were included. Non-scientific studies, and studies which focused on psychological counselling or training through internet or phone, were excluded. The search was conducted in Academic search complete, Scopus, ProQuest and Science Direct in October 2017. We explored the psychological outcomes of eCare technologies on informal carers of older people.

Results: We identified three wider themes: a peace of mind and reassurance of informal carers, b positive psychological outcomes, burden and quality of life of informal carers while using eCare technologies, c negative outcomes of technology on informal carers. The review also showed that monitoring devices were most reported eCare technologies in relation to positive psychological outcomes.

Discussions: Our study revealed a dearth of research on psychological outcomes of eCare technologies on informal carers. Informal carers of people with dementia were most frequently mentioned in selected studies, which can be due to the nature of the disease and its caring demands. Another open issue is whether positive psychological outcomes could be increased if informal carers' needs, perspectives and issues would be more considered by ICT developers and designers. Nowadays, ICT designers concentrate their work mostly on the services' functionalities and applications.

Conclusions: The results show a strong connection between older peoples' safety and carers' peace of mind, which can be reached through eCare technology. Although there were some contradictions of outcomes across the studies, there is at least some evidence to support the

use of eCare technologies in an effective approach in alleviating negative psychological outcomes e.g. burden reduction, increased peace of mind of informal carers.

Lessons learned: Availability, accessibility, appropriateness, acceptability and affordability of eCare technologies are future challenges that still need to be considered more systematically.

Limitations: The review contained a small number of selected studies, and even though there were other technological solutions identified during the search, we did not include internet-based interventions. Despite, the search key words used in the review were broadly inclusive in order to capture all studies, the search was limited to four databases and our scoping review search was limited to English studies only.

Suggestions for future research: Further investigation is needed on psychological outcomes of eCare technologies on different groups of carers and on key technological features that have a psychological impact on informal carers. There is a need for more scientific evidence whether the eCare technologies actually fulfil older people and informal carers' needs and that were cost efficient.

Keywords: ict; ageing; long-term care; outcomes; informal care
