

Experiences of Older People Living at Home and their Carers with Digital Health Services: An Exploratory Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to explore the specific experiences of both older people and carers with digital health services, so as to provide ideas for the subsequent design and service optimisation of digital health products.

Methods: This is a qualitative study using a content analysis approach. Between December 2023 and February 2024, the researcher conducted a semi-structured survey of older adults and caregivers through purposive and maximally-differentiated sampling in seven community health service centres.

Results: Eighteen older adults and 17 carers participated in this study, of which 10 older adults were matched with their carers. The results of the interviews consisted of 1 theme, 4 sub-themes, 14 categories, and 16 sub-categories. The theme was the experiences of older people living at home and their carers with digital health services, and sub-themes included: type of service, specific service experiences, influencing factors, and suggestions and expectations.

Conclusions: Older people recognise the benefits of digital health services, but their experience of digital health services is not ideal. Carers appreciated the convenience and efficiency of digital services more than older people, but did not use them as frequently in practice. In the future, the experience of older adults in using digital health services should be improved at three levels: government, service providers, and social support.

Keywords

Older adults; caregivers; digital health technology; qualitative study.