

Ownership as a Key for Successful Implementation of Digital Health Solutions

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It is widely recognized that substantial barriers exist to the introduction of digital innovations in healthcare. One of these barriers is that of ownership. Implementing a digital health solution involves a number of different actors in the organisation: IT department, management, project leader as well as healthcare professionals. Who owns the activity? When the key stakeholders do not experience ownership of the digital solution, they have neither the personal vision for how it can improve their care practice nor the motivation to make the necessary ongoing efforts to bring its possibilities to fruition.

Through two case studies of the introduction of digital tools into practice we have identified approaches that can either prevent or promote the development of an experience of ownership by the key stakeholders. Study 1 examined how a remote monitoring technology was incorporated into the rehabilitation care environment for patients with a chronic condition (cardiac disease). Study 2 followed the introduction of a digital self-management assessment tool for management of chronic conditions (diabetes, cardiovascular disease and rheumatology). In both cases the digital solution was seen as a communication bridge between the nurses and the patients that could enable the nurses to offer more targeted care and the patients to be more involved in their own care.

- In the remote monitoring case, the digital solution project was owned by the project manager. The key stakeholders (nurses) were not involved in discussions of how care practices would or could change - they were simply expected to add management of the remote monitoring data to their existing work practices. It is not surprising that the use of the remote monitoring system was not continued beyond the pilot study.
- In the second case, the approach to implementing the digital self-management assessment tool put the key stakeholders (nurses) at the center, allowing them to drive the discussions of the desired action space and to envision how their work practices, and patient care, could be expanded and improved through the use of the digital tool.

In both studies we were interested in learning how a digital health solution could become a value-creating part of care and patient practices. This is viewed as a matter of renewing practice and exploring the new space of action the digital health solution offers. The concerns the staff experience is of utter importance to address and understand. The healthcare professionals who are key stakeholders, either users of the solution, or the ones having the coming responsibility to promote the use of the solution to someone else, must have the possibility to own the core of the activity. This puts focus on how the digital health solution could support the advancement of key stakeholders' practice particularly regarding patient interaction. By providing a means for key stakeholders to reflect on their practice, become engaged and involved in a meaningful activity, they experience ownership of the digital solution and can continue to drive its use.