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Anne Sophie Mathiesen, Thordis Thomsen, Tonny Jensen, Charlotte Schiøtz, Henning Langberg, Ingrid Egerod

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Authors: Anne Sophie Mathiesen\textsuperscript{a}, Thordis Thomsen\textsuperscript{b,d}, Tonny Jensen\textsuperscript{a}, Charlotte Schiøtz\textsuperscript{a}, Henning Langberg\textsuperscript{c,d,e}, Ingrid Egerod

\textsuperscript{a}Corresponding author at Department of Endocrinology, Abdominal Centre, Copenhagen University Hospital Rigshospitalet, Blegdamsvej 9, DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark. Email: anne.sophie.mathiesen@regionh.dk, tel: +4527908669, fax: +4535455213.
\textsuperscript{b}Abdominal Centre, Copenhagen University Hospital Rigshospitalet, Blegdamsvej 9, DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark
\textsuperscript{c}CopenRehab, Section of Social Medicine, Dept. of Public Health, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Copenhagen, Henrik Pontoppidansvej 6,1, DK-2200 Copenhagen, Denmark
\textsuperscript{d}University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Health & Medical Sciences, Denmark
\textsuperscript{e}Intensive Care Unit 4131, Copenhagen University Hospital Rigshospitalet, Blegdamsvej 9, DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract:

\textbf{Background:} Digital interventions for improving diabetes management in Type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) are used universally. Digital interventions are defined as any intervention accessed and taking input from people with T2DM in the form of a web-based or mobile phone-based app to improve diabetes self-management. However, the current confidence in digital interventions threatens to augment social inequalities in health, also known as the “digital divide”. To counteract dissemination of the digital divide, we aimed to assess the potential of a tailored digital intervention for improving diabetes management in vulnerable people with T2DM.

\textbf{Methods:} A qualitative design using semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore the perspectives of 12 vulnerable people with T2DM. Interviews were analyzed using inductive content analysis. Vulnerability was defined by the presence of one or more comorbidities, one or more lifestyle risk factors, poor diabetes management, low educational level and low health literacy.

\textbf{Results:} The main themes identified were: “Dealing with diabetes distress” characterized by psychological avoidance mechanisms; “Suffering informational confusion” dealing with inconsistent information; “Experiencing digital alienation” dealing with loss of freedom when technology invades the private sphere; and “Missing the human touch” preferring human interaction over digital contact.
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