Invited Speaker Abstract

Official Language: English

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Title of Presentation

Opportunities of eHealth for limiting the burden of ill mental health on society.

1. Abstract

This presentation aims to provide an overview of the wide range of E-health applications for mental healthcare that are currently being developed and researched, and which are also gradually implemented in routine practice throughout Europe. The scope of e-mental health is diverse, as it ranges from websites over apps, to wearables and even virtual reality. The potential focus of these digital tools is also very broad: it is not only limited to treating disorders, to alleviating symptoms, but even to preventing them altogether.

Given the diversity of technologies and the way these can be used, this talk will focus on one particular form of mental health problems. To be more specific, it will discuss the technological advances in the field of eating disorders. After briefly highlighting current research evidence for the use of technology in this particular context, a selection of existing good practices will be discussed and/or demonstrated. Selected topics include how websites aim to facilitate the promotion of high-quality information towards eating disorders, how a smartphone app can provide support in difficult times, how a wearable can be used to provide insights into personal stressors and triggers and how a virtual reality intervention can be a part of body image treatment.

2. key references

Karekla, M., Kasinopoulos, O., Neto, D., Ebert, D. D., Van Daele, T., Nordgreen, T., Höfer, S., Oeverland, S., & Jensen, K. L. (2019). Best Practices and Recommendations for Digital Interventions to Improve Engagement and Adherence in Chronic Illness Sufferers. *European Psychologist, 24*, 49-67. doi:10.1027/1016-9040/a000349

Ebert, D. D., Van Daele, T., Nordgreen, T. Karekla, M., Compare, T. A., Zarbo, C., … (on behalf of the EFPA E-Health Taskforce) & Baumeister, H. (2018). Internet and mobile-based psychological interventions: applications, efficacy and potential for improving mental health. A report of the EFPA e-health taskforce. *European Psychologist, 23*, 167-187. doi:10.1027/1016-9040/a000318

3. key messages

- There is already a strong and increasing evidence-base for the use of E-health in mental healthcare.
- Within the context of eating disorders, a wide range of tools and methods have already been developed. Although some are still mostly research, others are also making their way to routine practice.
- In some instances, patients can use these tool fairly autonomously. Healthcare professionals such as dietitians, however, can play a important role to keep them on track and motivated to make them take full benefit of E-health applications.