Co-designing an online educational resource to help adolescents improve their digital health literacy

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Background:
Digital media is nowadays ubiquitous in the lives of adolescents and provides many opportunities to engage with health information. However, there is an increased risk of adolescents engaging with inaccurate or biased health information on the internet and social media, resulting in poor health-related behaviours which can negatively affect wellbeing and development. To effectively navigate and apply online health information, adolescents would benefit from improving their digital health literacy (DHL). There are limited education tools in DHL that are interactive, self-directed and relatable for adolescents. A co-design approach can incorporate adolescents' perspectives in designing an education tool to ensure its relevance. This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the co-design approach in creating an educational resource designed to improve adolescents' DHL.

Methods:
Two co-design workshops were conducted with adolescents (12-17 years) to explore their habits and education needs regarding DHL, evaluate the DHL educational app "mis-Adventures" and design new storylines for the app. Data was collected via novel workshop design artefacts, including storyboards and annotated posters, and surveys. We conducted qualitative content analysis on the design artefacts to identify themes and sub-themes in the data. Surveys were analysed via descriptive statistics.

Results:
Forty-one participants attended the co-design workshops. Strong use of image and video-based social media was evident in the DHL storylines designed, with many foreseeing the use of AI to extract health information. Participants' co-designed storylines involved health topics such as dietary supplements, fitness, mental health and skin care. Storyline narratives focused on identifying trustworthy online sources of health information and dealing with concerns regarding peer pressure, social media influencers, scams and misinformation conveyed by parents.

Conclusions:
The co-design methodology was useful for understanding adolescents' DHL experiences and education needs, as well as harnessing their designs for further development of an educational resource to maximise its relevance.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:
The researchers in the study have no conflicts of interest to declare.