



New Zealand nurses' ongoing concerns of using digital technologies during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

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Overview

- Introduction
- New Zealand as context
- Methods
- Findings
- What's next



Introduction

- Adoption of digital technologies accelerated during COVID-19
- Important to build on changes and advances made
- Nurses' perspective not understood
- New Zealand nurses' ongoing concerns of using any digital technologies during and after the worst of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Draws on data from:
 - a nationwide survey from 2020
 - + a follow-up 2022 survey



New Zealand as context

- Aim is “Pae Ora - Healthy Futures for all where people live longer healthier lives”
- Taxation funded - guided by Health & Digital Health Strategy
- Hospital care is free; PHC and medicines are subsidized
- Population 5.1 million & 56,000 registered nurses
- April 2020 - COVID-19 Lockdown – elimination with border controls
- 2023 – 2¼ million confirmed cases of with 2,716 COVID deaths
- Now nearly 90% of those over 12 vaccinated. Total of 12¼ million vaccine doses administered.



Methods – What are your concerns of using any digital technologies?

- 2020 and 2022 national surveys of NZ nurses use of technology
- 2020 - April to May 2020, during the longest lockdown & most COVID-19 restrictions
- 2022 - July to August 2022
- Recruitment using snowball method by email to professional networks and social media - “Pass it on”
- Registered nurses who had been working in NZ since February 2020
- Anonymous online survey via Qualtrics
- Data from open ended question: What are your concerns of using any digital technologies?
- Analysis - text responses were collated and thematically analysed (Braun and Clark, 2022)



Findings





Participants

- 411 responses in total
- 220 in 2020
- 191 in 2022
- Nurses from across New Zealand
- Nurses from a range of practice areas
- 2022 - 'other' category of main area of practice included managed isolation facility, infection prevention & control roles

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2020

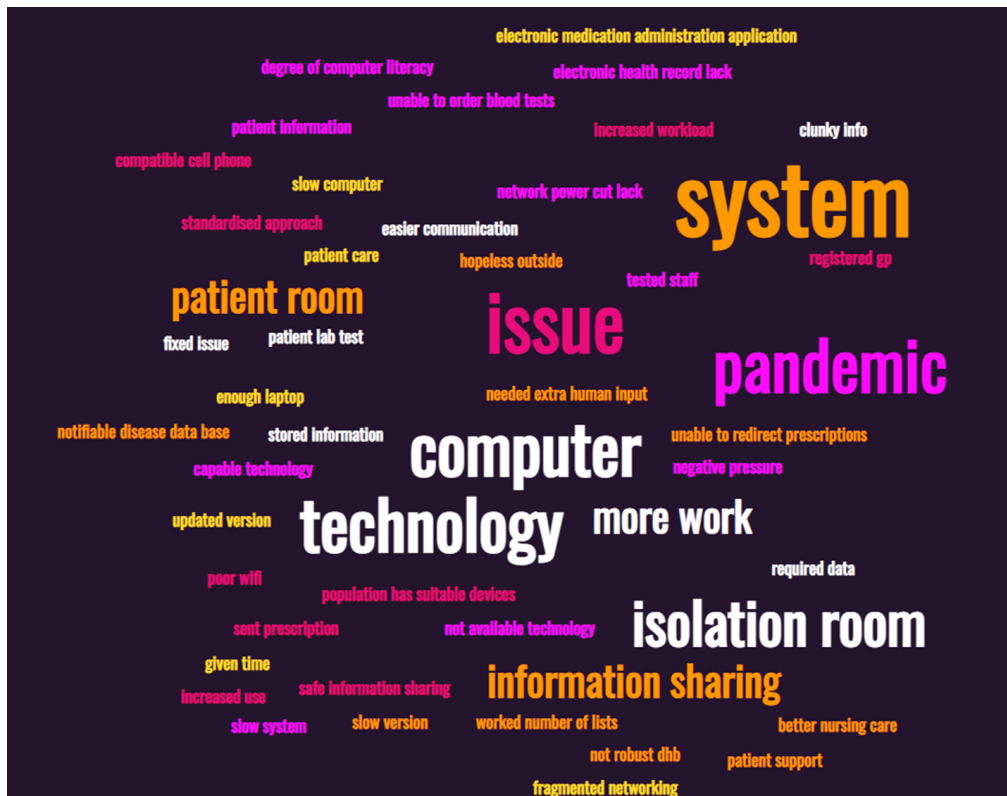


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2022





Themes

2020	2022
Access – connectivity, internet speed; costs; devices; systems - ease of use, need for training; outdated systems and system overload	Access – systems; connectivity internet speed; devices
Interpersonal- face -to-face; isolating	Health professional engagement – lack of training, workload
Inequities	Inequities
Made change happen	COVID specific issues



Access

2020 concerns were about

- connectivity, internet speed
- costs; devices;
- systems in terms of their ease of use, the need for training and complaints about systems being outdated and overloaded.

2022 access still the main theme, but focus was on the systems and often lack of interoperability

“Unreliable internet is a huge issue”

“Internet speed and access in rural remote communities is a concern”

“My organisation has multiple electronic platforms which are all individually useful, but they do not 'talk' to each other, so the increased use of these systems has just increased the frustration”



Interpersonal

2020 concerns

- Importance of face-to-face contact with patients
- Nurses working in mental health, palliative care and with older people and families specifically commented on the importance of having face-to-face contact
- Some saw opportunity

2022 - how nurses and other health professionals engaged with information and communication technologies (ICT).

“I miss the physical patient contact and still think that face to face is important”

“Some older people find it hard to manage video calls”

“Instead of seeing it as dehumanising our connections as social beings, we should see it as an opportunity to move forward in this age of technology”

“not inputting the data they can” & “lack of compliance with accurately filling out online forms”.



Inequity – digital divide

- Nurses concerned for patients and lack of resources
- Costs concerns
- Regional differences
- Those in isolated and rural communities.

“It has worked well for those who have the resources and are able to video conference. Unfortunately, not so good for those without resources whom I was unable to connect with”

“some families do not have capable technology”

“some were unable to respond due to lack of credit on their phones”



2020 - Made change happen

“improvements that have previously been resisted by incumbent staff who like to keep the status quo; but now we have moved out of this place of resistance”

“Neither organisation nor IT department, equipment or capacity were prepared for such a crisis which requires significantly increased use of technology and people having to work from home”.

“blurring of personal time and space”

2022

Concerns were specific to COVID

Use of ICT and infection control

Lack of ICT in negative pressure/isolation rooms.



What's next...

- Infrastructure improvements
- Equity
- Telehealth now a common feature
- Security – a concern
- Sustain impetus for ICT use started with COVID
- Repeat survey in 2025



Thank you

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