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Utilising Mobile Health Apps – A Comparison of GP Perceptions across Australia and Germany

Tanja Schroeder

PhD Student

*Australian Institute of Health Innovation /
Macquarie University*

AIHI International collaboration

JOINT PHD PROGRAM WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN NEU-ULM
GERMANY

My Background:

- IT-System Management
- Social Work
- Social Management
- Information Systems

My PhD Project Aims:

- Understanding the perspectives and attitudes of doctors and older adults related to the introduction of mHealth apps in Germany and Australia
- Identifying the adoption factors of mHealth apps among doctors and older adults in Germany and Australia



Background

DIGITAL HEALTH APPLICATIONS (DIGA) IN GERMANY

- Digital-Healthcare-Act
- Digital Health Applications Ordinance (DiGAV)
- prescribable mobile health apps with a medical purpose – DiGA
- New approach may bring challenges to older adults



What is a mobile health app?

INTERNET, SMARTPHONE, COMPUTER OR ANY OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICE



Apps for healthy living



Apps for clinical diagnosis



Apps for remote monitoring



Apps for personal health records



Apps for reminder



Apps for social connection

What is a Digital Health App (DiGA)?



Do's

- Medical device
- Risk class I or II a
- Based on digital technologies
- Medical purpose
- Recognition, monitoring, treatment or alleviation of diseases
- Used only by the patient or by the patient and healthcare provider










Don't

- DiGA does not serve primary prevention
- No practice equipment
- No telehealth
- Not used by the doctor

DIGA Dictionary

47 PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY MOBILE APPS AND WEB-BASED APPLICATIONS

	Heart and circulation		Reproductive organs, kidneys and urinary tract		Hormones and metabolism
	Muscles, bones and joints		Neurological system		Cancer
	Hearing, Respiratory system		Psyche		Digestion

Study Aims

Our aim was to a) compare doctors' attitudes and intentions towards prescribing DiGAs in Germany and recommendations of mHealth apps in Australia, and b) gain insights about barriers to the introduction of mHealth apps in both countries.



QUALITATIVE STUDY

- Design
 - Semi-structured expert interviews and classical conceptualist approach
 - Audio-recorded, 25-60 min duration
- Participants
 - 14 doctors
- Recruitment
 - North Rhine-Westphalia and New South Wales
 - August-November 2021 in Germany, August-November 2022 in Australia
 - Municipal network, social media and researcher networks
- Topics
 - Doctors' perspectives on the introduction and use of DiGAs and mHealth apps
 - Perception of the impact of DiGAs and mHealth apps on patient adherence
 - Patient empowerment through DiGAs and mHealth apps

Results

DOCTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF PRESCRIBING OR RECOMMENDING MHEALTH APPS



Patient tech-savviness



Information support



Reasons for app
recommendations



Privacy and Security

Lessons Learned

IMPLICATIONS



mHealth app value

In General, positive attitudes toward the adoption of DiGAs and mHealth apps

Australian doctors value mHealth apps as supportive of patient empowerment, patient education, digital literacy, and disease management, while data security concerns influence German doctors



Affinity

The digital affinity of doctors significantly and positively affected attitudes and intentions to prescribe or recommend mHealth apps in Germany and Australia



Barriers

Social, organisational, financial and technological factors impacting doctors' adoption of mHealth in Germany and Australia



Future

1. Which channels of content are most appropriate
2. Consideration of whether doctors are unwilling to prescribe DiGAs to some patient groups
3. How digital divides can be addressed



Potential

Evidence-based mHealth app prescriptions in Australia appear to be, while the existing German DiGA prescription systems require more information and training support for professional healthcare.



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Thank you

QUESTIONS AND FEEDBACK ARE MOST WELCOME

Tanja.Schroeder@hdr.mq.edu.au



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