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Understanding the benefits and risks of a patient portal configured for HIV care: patient and healthcare professional perspectives

Dominic Chu, David Lessard, Moustafa A. Laymouna, Kim Engler, Tibor Schuster, Yuanchao Ma, Nadine Kronfli, Jean-Pierre Routy, Tarek Hijal, Karine Lacombe, Nancy Sheehan, Hayette Rougier, Bertrand Lebouché

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**Service de Maladies
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Hôpital Saint-Antoine**



Background

- Patient portals allow people living with HIV (PLWH) to access their personal health information, among other functions
- This study aims to configure a patient portal to engage PLWH for HIV care in Montreal, Canada and Paris, France
- Objective: to understand the perceived risks and benefits among PLWH and healthcare providers (HCPs) of patient portal use in HIV care

Methods

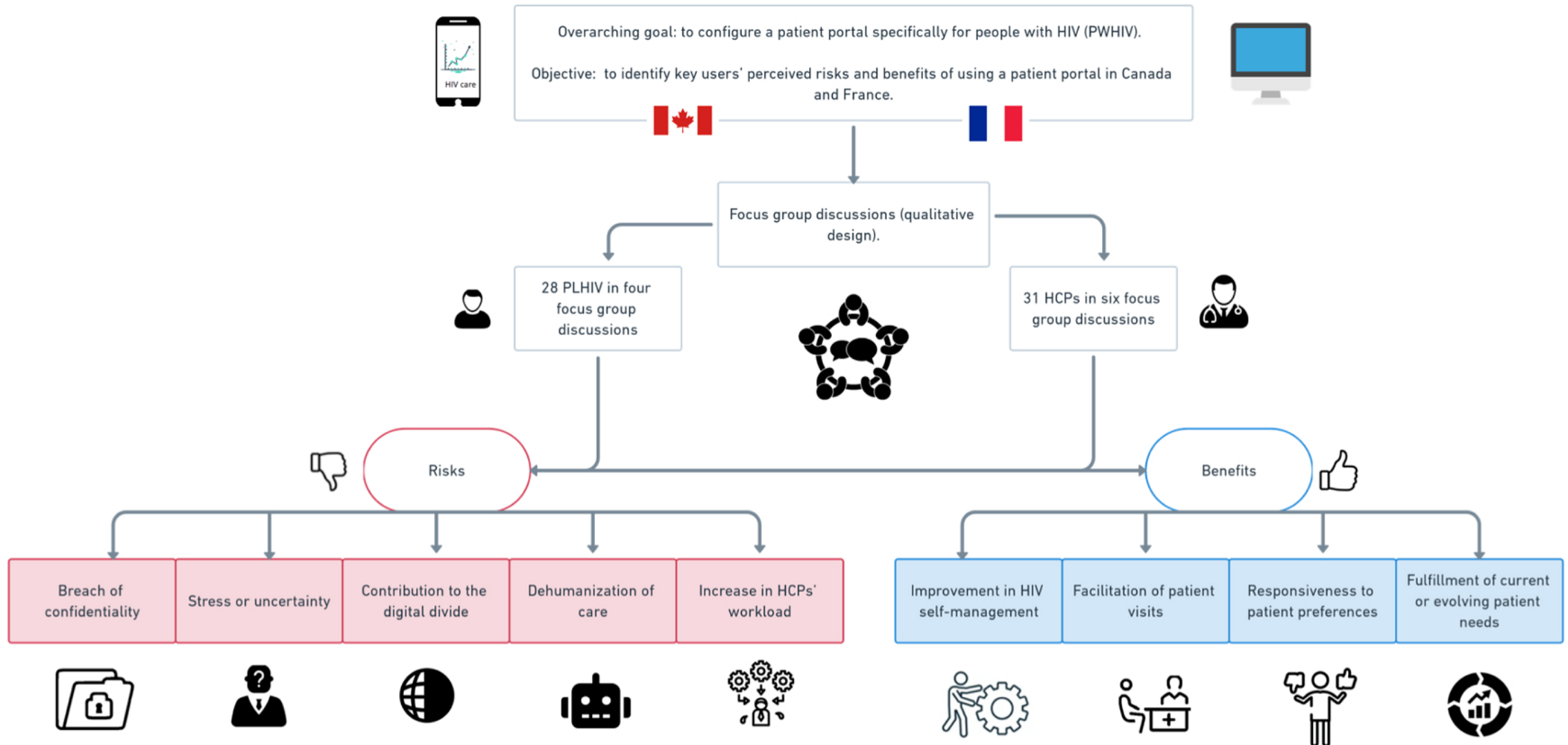
- PLWH and their HCPs were recruited through maximum variation sampling and purposeful sampling respectively
- Recruitment was done at McGill University Health Centre (Montreal, Canada) and Hospital Saint-Antoine
- Semi-structured focus group discussions (FGD) conducted between August 2019 and March 2020
- FGD were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using content analysis

Results

Article

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Dominic Chu ^{1,2}, David Lessard ^{2,3,4}, Moustafa A. Laymouna ^{1,2}, Kim Engler ^{2,3,4}, Tibor Schuster ¹, Yuanchao Ma ^{2,3,4,5}, Nadine Kronfli ^{3,4}, Jean-Pierre Routy ⁴, Tarek Hijal ⁶, Karine Lacombe ⁷, Nancy Sheehan ^{4,8}, Hayette Rougier ⁹ and Bertrand Lebouché ^{1,2,3,4,*}



Results:

Perceived benefits

1. Improvement in HIV self-management

- A patient portal can increase PLWHs' health literacy, medication adherence, and retention in care

2. Facilitation of patient visits

- Both groups noted that a portal can support patient check-in, transfer to other specialty clinics using a navigation tool, check-in

3. Responsiveness to patient preferences

- Options to select languages, security features, and data sharing were important for both groups

4. Fulfillment of current or evolving patient needs

- Evolving PLWH healthcare needs can be met with two-way communication functions, patient-reported outcome measures, and real-time updates on appointment wait times

Perceived risks

1. Breach of confidentiality

- Both PLWH and HCPs were concerned health data could be hacked or sent to the wrong people

2. Stress or uncertainty

- PLWH were concerned a portal may be complicated, or feature inaccurate or difficult-to-interpret data

3. Contribution to the digital divide

- Both groups noted a portal could exacerbate inequitable access to healthcare

4. Dehumanized care

- A patient portal may dehumanize care by reducing human interaction between PLWH and HCPs

5. Increased HCP workload

- Both groups were concerned about expanded HCP responsibilities with using a patient portal

Discussion and Conclusion

Both PLWH and HCPs agreed upon perceived benefits and risks with using a patient portal

By engaging key stakeholders, this study allows:

1. For a better understanding of end-user perspectives prior to the patient portal's implementation
2. For anticipation of the potential barriers to implementation and strategies to address each issue:
 - a. For example, training PLWH and HCPs to use the portal
 - b. Optimize the configuration of the portal's content and functions to meet stakeholders' relevant needs



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