

Interest in and Experience with the Use of Patient Portals Among Adolescents in Mental Health Care

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Abstract. Patient portals hold the potential to support patients and enhance treatment, yet some concerns exist for adults in mental health care and adolescents in general. Due to limited studies on patient portal use in adolescent mental health care, the aim was to examine the interest in and experiences with the use of patient portals among adolescents in mental health care. In a cross-sectional survey, adolescent patients in specialist mental health care across Norway were invited between April and September 2022. The questionnaire included questions on their interests in and experiences with using patient portals. Fifty-three (8,5%), adolescents between 12-18 (mean: 15) responded, of which 64 % were interested in using patient portals. Almost half of the respondents would share access to their patient portal with healthcare providers (48 %) and designated family members (43 %). One-third had used a patient portal, where 28 % had used it to change an appointment, 24 % to see their medications and 22 % to communicate with healthcare providers. The knowledge from this study can be used to inform the set-up of patient portal services for adolescents in mental health care.

Keywords. Patient portals, telehealth, eHealth, electronic health records, adolescent mental health care

1. Introduction

Patient portals may support adolescents in mental health care by e.g., enabling access to health information [1,2]. Research on patient portal use for adolescents outside and adults in mental health care reports both potentials, and concerns e.g., ethical concerns on confidentiality for minors and on access to mental health notes [1,2,3]. Yet limited studies exist on patient portal use for adolescents in mental health care [5]. Thus, knowledge about adolescents' perspectives is needed to inform the setup and use of

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patient portals for adolescents in mental health care. The aim was to examine the interest and experiences of using patient portals among adolescents in mental health care.

2. Method

A cross-sectional survey was conducted between April and September 2022. A questionnaire was sent to adolescents between 12 and 18 years of age receiving treatment at four specialist child and adolescent mental health services across Norway. They were asked about their interest in and experience with using patient portals.

3. Results

Fifty-three (8,5 %) adolescents between 12-18 years of age (mean 15) responded, of which 64 % were interested in using patient portals. Almost half of the respondents would share access to their patient portal with healthcare providers (48 %) and designated family members (43 %). One-third had used a patient portal, where 28 % had used it to change an appointment, 24 % to see their medications and 22 % for communication.

4. Conclusions

The majority of respondents were interested in using patient portals, and one-third had used a patient portal. The knowledge from this study can be used to inform the set-up and use of patient portal services for adolescents in mental health care.

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