Author’s response to reviews

Title: No personalization without participation: On the active contribution of psychiatric patients to the development of a mobile application for mental health

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Irene Pala,

On behalf of my colleagues and I, please find enclosed a revised manuscript titled “No personalization without participation: On the active contribution of psychiatric patients to the development of a mobile application for mental health” (MS: 145830200912453). I think that you will see that we did address each of the 7 comments from the reviewers, as per your April 29th email. We appreciate the time that the reviewers and you have invested in the review process of our manuscript.

A first reviewer expressed 3 concerns:

1) The use of mobile electronic devices to answer psychiatric questionnaires isn’t very innovative. I know clinics which do this in their clinical routine since more than a decade (you may look for the author “Matthias Rose”)

- We agree that the use of electronic devices to answer psychiatric questionnaires is not new. However, the main focus of the manuscript is about the contribution of psychiatric patients to the development of a mobile application. Only secondarily is it about the use of mobile electronic devices to answer such questionnaires. We cannot tell with certainty that we found the right “Matthias Rose”, several papers under that name as first author seeming to be written in German, a language none of us can read. Nevertheless, we did refer to Rose et al to acknowledge that the use of electronic devices to answer psychiatric questionnaires is not new. More precisely, we now refer to Becker et al and Walter et al, including Rose (number 36 and 37 at the beginning of the Conclusion) regarding a computerized adaptive test (CAT) for assessing anxiety, a CAT that does resemble a mobile application. None of these papers discusses the eventual contribution of patients to the R&D of that CAT.

- The first sentence of the Conclusion reads like this: “The use of electronic devices to answer psychiatric questionnaires is certainly not new, for example in the assessment of anxiety [36,37]. What is new with this study is that it provides…”
2) **Please provide information regarding the diagnostic procedure**

- These two sentences were added after the first sentence of the first paragraph of the Study design section: “Participating patients were recruited in specialized outpatient clinics: Anxiety and Mood disorders clinic, and Psychotic disorders clinic, where patients receive services in accordance with these specific diagnostics. Participants at the ER were not recruited on the basis of their diagnostics.”

3) “apps are usually designed for professionals”. You may have a look at the following reviews on apps for patients: Abroms et al. (2011); Breton et al (2011); Thurm & Kane (2010)

- Abroms et al (2011) and Breton et al (2011): The 3rd sentence of the Background section now reads like this: “In the medical field, for example, apps can be used by patients who would like to quit smoking [3] or to lose weight [4], but more often apps are designed to be used by professionals [5].”

- Thurm & Kane: These four sentences have been added at the end of the Conclusion: “Many apps that are currently available do not have written privacy policies [38]. This should soon cease to be the case, as emerging certification standards now request such policies, particularly in the medical field. Documentation about how the content of an app was formulated should also be provided to make sure that this content is reliable [39]. Among those standards, we suggest that information should also be provided about how the targeted users of an app, whether clinicians or patients, were included in the R&D process of that app.

A second reviewer formulated 5 comments:

1) **On page 4, at the end of the Background section and/or at the start of the Study design section, the study objectives should be clarified better**

- The following information is now provided at the end of the Background section: “The pilot project aimed to answer two questions regarding the participants’ experience using an app: (1) Are psychiatric patients able to use the mobile application technology? and (2) How can the mobile application be improved to better meet patients’ needs?”

2) **On page 5, in the first paragraph, a clarification of how the samples were selected (to be representative) should be added**

- Three sentences were added to the paragraph that follows Table 1 on page 6: “At each site, a Research Nurse (RN) was introduced by the clinical team to the patients, unless the chief psychiatrist considered that a patient was not able to participate at that time. The clinical team stopped approaching patients when the target number of participants was reached for each site. Recruitment took approximately two weeks (10 days) at the AMD and PD sites, and four weeks (20 days) at the ER.”
3) On page 6, in the first paragraph of the Methodology section, it should be clarified how the RN observations were checked for credibility, and/or the observation guide (likely captured in Appendix A of the research protocol) should be added for similar clarification.

- The observation guide has been added following the first paragraph of the Methodology section (Table 2: Appendix A of the research protocol).

4) On page 7, in the last paragraph before the section Results and discussion, clarification should be added on how confidentiality of discussion in the focus groups was safeguarded, i.e., in relation to focus group participants informed of maintaining confidentiality of other focus group participants.

- This sentence has been added before the section Results and discussion on page 8: “No names of individual debriefing session participants were mentioned and focus group participants were asked to maintain the confidentiality of other focus group participants.”

5) On page 15, in the last sentence of the Conclusion section, it would be helpful to add that family members and other significant others of patients could be involved too.

- This sentence has been added at the bottom of page 16: “Family members and other significant others of patients could be involved too.”

Please also note that I did include the tables at the end of the manuscript file. In the hope that the modifications that were brought are at the satisfaction of the Medical Informatics & Decision Making journal.

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Additional references


