

Digital support for medication administration

Status-enhancing innovation for care workers?

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Background: There are assumptions that innovative ICT solutions in healthcare can improve the efficiency and contribute to increased quality. Innovation through ICT is also expected to increase status of and attract men to care work.

A project aimed at finding innovative ICT solutions was realized between 2009 and 2012. The project involved a healthcare center and two nursing homes. Technicians (all men) were those in the project given the assignment of finding innovative solutions together with staff. Involved in the project were also ICT companies and academic researchers. This research study was undertaken in a nursing home context. A tool for medication administration was under development and to be tested.

Purpose; to describe staff's perceptions of digital support for medication administration and understand staff's underlying values when arguing for or against the tool.

Data collection; focus-group interviews were carried out to collect data. To analyze and interpret the content of the data, a phenomenographic method was used.

Findings; Participants questioned the *utility* and also the *need* of the ICT solution. Participants also expressed a risk for impaired *working environment* as an effect of the tool. They also thought the tool would be *complicated to use* and sometimes would lack in performance. Increased status as an effect of introducing ICT was a belief that was not held by the staff.

Conclusions; Setting aside the fact that from the perspective of an outsider, the intention of the project was indeed to do good, staff did not perceive the ICT solution in a positive manner. Politicians and policymakers may be over-emphasizing the possibilities of ICT for solving future challenges in healthcare. Focus on technological innovations and a discourse in which care workers are excluded can actually be contra-productive to the possibilities of enhancing the status of care work, which is still predominantly performed by women

Keyword: nursing home staff, innovations, care, perceptions, ICT