

National implementation of telehealth in Denmark: Understanding the complexities of large-scale implementation

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Background:

With a growing number of chronic patients and a shortage of healthcare professionals, modern health systems face mounting economic pressures. Telehealth has emerged as a promising solution to address these challenges and is considered a critical component of future healthcare provision. However, implementing telehealth on large scale is complex and remains a challenge in healthcare systems. To fully grasp these challenges, it is essential to look beyond the technology and delve into the processes and actors involved in its implementation. To address this gap, this study investigates the dynamics of large-scale implementation at a political-administrative level through an in-depth case study of the national implementation of TeleCOPD in Denmark - a home-monitoring telehealth intervention designed to support patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

Methods:

An in-depth qualitative study of the implementation process at the political-administrative level was undertaken. Data consisted of project descriptions, policy documents, and 12 semi-structured interviews with 16 key stakeholders in the implementation process across the national, regional and municipality level. Data was analysed in accordance with thematic analysis using an abductive strategy.

Results:

This study explores the implementation process of telehealth through the lens of translation theory. The analysis is ongoing and results will be presented at the conference. Preliminary analysis suggests that large-scale implementation of telehealth is a profoundly complex process, necessitating the collaboration of various stakeholders across organisational hierarchies. Substantial translational work is required at the political-administrative level to implement telehealth across diverse organisational contexts. Moreover, understanding the role of context in this translation process is essential.

Conclusion:

The results of this study will generate valuable knowledge about large-scale implementation of telemedicine in addition to insights into the role of the political-administrative level in the implementation process