Telemonitoring for patients with chronic heart failure: a best practice for nurses

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Introduction

This paper describes a best practice by presenting useful materials for nurses to support them in developing and implementing telemonitoring for patients with chronic heart failure in their own organization. The case is a Dutch hospital with a successful telemonitoring practice for chronic heart patients recovering at home. Although telemonitoring is a regular service in this particular practice, it is not yet commonplace elsewhere.

Aim

To support nurses in the development and implementation of heart care at a distance in their own clinical practice by providing practical tools.

Process

This research was conducted in close collaboration with nurses, and included three steps. In the first step design thinking principles were used in eight co-creation sessions. The following methods were applied: walking interviews, customer journey maps (CJM), keeping a diary, context mapping and affinity diagram. In the second step, the collected data was analyzed and in a iterative process discussed with the nurses. Based on these data several (pre-filled) templates, cases and patient experiences were developed. In the final step, these materials were presented, tested, adapted and approved by the nurses. In parallel four patients were interviewed to develop patient cases.

Results

The website www.verpleegkundigehartzorgopafstand.nl displays the description of a best practice supplemented with a toolbox. This toolbox was aimed for nurses to develop and implement telemonitoring in their own practice. The deliverables include: a (pre-filled) template for a CJM, personas of patients, cases for supervision, patient experiences, and implementation plan. Four cases were produced based on the diary for a week in which the nurses provided several characteristics. The cases include questions for supervision and reflection on the telemonitoring (principles) for patients. Patient experiences were self-assessed by the involved patients. Nurses were convinced that the various products will be useful to reflect on the own practice and introduce telemonitoring.

Recommendations

This description of this best practice, including the (pre-filled) templates, can be used for nurses to develop their own telemonitoring practice. Developing telemonitoring in a hospital is complex and cannot be introduced overnight. It is important to include the enthusiastic and decision-making nurses and managers in the organization. Furthermore this project underlines the idea of involving nurses in the development and implementation of telemonitoring. Therefore nurses need support, for example in fixed time.