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Kidney Transplant Recipients Perceptions of Consumer-Based Mobile Health Applications for Self-Health Tracking

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Problem: Kidney transplant recipients are required to participate in lifelong self-care responsibilities to prevent graft rejection and death. The rapid growth of consumer-based mobile health applications (mHealth apps) provides a platform for kidney recipients to set goals and monitor self-care practices in real-time. Despite the increasing number of consumer-based mHealth apps for self-care, there is little research exploring patients' experiences with mHealth apps as a self-care tool.

Objective: The purpose of this qualitative study were to explore kidney recipient's perceptions for using consumer-based mHealth apps for self-health tracking.

Method/Approach: A purposive sample of adult kidney recipients was recruited from a Midwest Transplant Program. We conducted face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured interview guide to obtain perspectives for using consumer-based mHealth apps for self-health tracking. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and coded using the NVivo 12.0 qualitative software.

Results: We conducted N = 20 individual interviews with kidney recipients. The majority of participants had a mean age of 54 (SD = 14.8), and who earned an annual income of \$66,000 or higher. Qualitative content data analysis revealed five themes that related to self-health tracking (medication, nutrition, fluid intake, lab values, and physical activity) The most popular mHealth app that participants used for self-health tracking was physical activity and nutrition (n= 13, 65%). All (N= 20) participants reported they would like to have access to an app that was specifically designed for post-kidney transplant self-care.

Conclusions and Application for Nursing Practice: Our study is the first study to explore kidney recipients' perceptions of using consumer-based mHealth apps as a tool for self-health tracking. Overall, the participants in this study reported a positive experience when using consumer-based mHealth apps for self-care post-transplant. Consumer-based mHealth apps have the potential to be a cost-effective strategy for providing tailored education and real-time self-tracking which might ultimately improve survival rates for kidney recipients.

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