<u>Abstract</u>

Physicians' and Individuals' Attitudes Toward Digital Mental Health Tools: Protocol for a Web Survey Study With Physician and Stakeholder Interviews

Diogo Nogueira-Leite, MSc; Ricardo Cruz-Correia, MSc, PhD

Department of Community Medicine, Information and Decision in Health, Faculty of Medicine, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal

Corresponding Author:
Diogo Nogueira-Leite, MSc
Department of Community Medicine, Information and Decision in Health
Faculty of Medicine
University of Porto
Rua Dr Plácido da Costa
Porto, 4200-450
Portugal
Phone: 351 913667140
Email: diogo.fdnl@gmail.com

Abstract

Background: Digital transformation is impacting health care delivery and showing great market dynamism, bringing opportunities and concerns alike. Digital health applications are a vibrant segment where regulation is emerging, with Germany paving the way with its DiGA program. Simultaneously, anxiety and depression constitute global health concerns, and their prevalence is expected to worsen due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its containment measures. Portugal and its National Health System may be a useful testbed for digital health interventions seeking to manage anxiety and depression. This research methodology is very relevant in studies on mental health, making the protocol highly reusable.

Objective: The paper outlines the protocol for a research project on the attitudes of physicians and potential users toward digital mental health apps to improve access to care and patient outcomes and to reduce the burden of disease for anxiety and depression.

Methods: Web surveys will be conducted to acquire data from main stakeholders (physicians and academic community). Data analysis will replicate studies from Dahlhausen and Borghouts to derive conclusions regarding the relative acceptance and likelihood of successful implementation of digital mental health apps in Portugal.

Results: The findings of the proposed studies will elicit important information on how physicians and individuals perceive digital mental health apps interventions to improve access to care and patient outcomes and to reduce the burden of disease for anxiety and depression.

Conclusions: The results of the studies projected in this research protocol will have implications for researchers and academia, industry, and policy makers regarding the adoption and implementation of digital health mental apps and associated interventions.

Conflicts of Interest: None declared.

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