

Can journey mapping be used to visualize information sharing in home care?

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Home care nurses work in an organization that interacts with several other healthcare settings and services, including basic home care services, rehabilitation, primary care centres, nursing homes, different departments of hospital care, emergency care teams, and pharmacies. In their daily work this means that they spend a lot of time on communication and information sharing both within their own organisation, across organisational borders and with the patients and their relatives. The interaction can be handled using synchronous channels – talking in the phone, using video calls, or walking to the home services office for a face-to-face meeting – or it must be done asynchronously – using a fax machine, writing physical notes or printing documents, sending e-mail or text messages, or using messaging services in other digital systems.

In the daily work routine, the nurse needs access to various pieces of information. This information is most often either prepared in the morning and carried with them on physical paper, or is accessed by calling a colleague. Some information must be brought back to the office for documentation or other follow-up activities. Other information must be shared, with home care services, with patient and relatives, or with other care instances. This complex mesh of information that is handled and shared is central for understanding how digital systems may support the daily work. The nurses may have laptops with access to the electronic health record, but the information that can be retrieved from this, or should be fed back into this, is only one piece of all information that is handled throughout a day.

This study investigates the use of journey mapping as a tool for visualizing the flow of information in home care. Journey mapping is a design method with the purpose of visualizing the interaction of a user and a product or service. It tries to encompass the whole user experience including actions and touch points between user and product, feelings and other related information. Hence, the visualized journey in a journey map is originally from one persons' perspective. Here we will instead emanate from the perspective of the information, and draw the journey map based on different pieces of information, using a set of concrete scenarios from home care. The aim is to get a better understanding of how information flows in the home care setting, and the journey map will be a useful tool in the process of developing home care further. This can for example be in the process of designing digital support systems, for designing the information itself, or for developing work routines around the information.

Keywords. Journey mapping, home care, information, communication, digitalization