

Differences in the experiences of reading medical records online: elderly, older and younger adults compared

Isto Huvila

Uppsala University & Åbo Akademi University

isto.huvila@abm.uu.se

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9196-2106>

Kristina Eriksson-Backa

Åbo Akademi University

kristina.eriksson-backa@abo.fi

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0583-2354>

Jonas Noll

Uppsala University

jonas.moll@it.uu.se

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4772-4730>

Gunilla Myreteg

Uppsala University

gunilla.myreteg@fek.uu.se

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1272-4068>

Maria Hägglund

Uppsala University

maria.hagglund@kbh.uu.se

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6839-3651>

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Even if there is a lot of literature on health information behaviour and some research comparing age groups (e.g. Ek, 2013; Lustria, Smith, & Hinnant, 2011), the understanding of the differences between age groups is still incomplete. Earlier age-related research has tended to focus on the oldest (e.g., Yates et al., 2012; Enwald et al., 2017; Eriksson-Backa, Enwald, Hirvonen, & Huvila, 2018) and young citizens (e.g., Beck et al., 2014; Galeshi, Sharman, & Cai, 2018; Hirvonen et al., 2016; Martínez-Martinez, González, & Cambra, 2018), while especially the older adults, who are still active in working life but approaching retirement, have received only limited attention (Huvila, Daniels, Cajander, & Åhlfeldt, 2016; Huvila et al., 2018). A survey with Swedish patients who had read their medical record online using the national e-health portal *Journalen* was conducted in 2016 to map the experiences of older adults (born 1946–1960) using medical records based e-health and information services in comparison to elderly and younger patients.

Material and methods

The study is based on a national survey of patients in Sweden. The survey was designed on the basis of previous interview and survey studies with patients and health care professionals (e.g., Grünloh, Cajander, & Myreteg, 2016; Huvila, Cajander, Daniels, & Åhlfeldt, 2015; Huvila et al., 2016; Rexhepi, Åhlfeldt, Cajander, & Huvila, 2016; Scandurra, Jansson, Forsberg-Fransson, & Ålander, 2015). The data were collected between June and October, 2016. The survey was accessible in the e-health portal *Journalen*, which is a part of the larger national e-health portal 1177.se, in Sweden. In total, 423,141 patients logged into *Journalen* during the study period and had access to the survey. Of the 2587 patients who completed the survey, 62.97% (1,629/2587) were women, 30.85% men (798/2587) and 0.4% identified themselves as other (10/2587).

The data have been preliminarily analysed with SPSS 25.0 using Kruskal-Wallis and Pearson Chi-Square tests with a 95% confidence interval to study how the group of respondents labelled as *Older Adults*, born 1946–1960 (by the time of data collection between 55 and 72 years old) differ from those born after 1960 (i.e., younger than 55 by the time of data collection) labelled as *Young Adults*, and those born before 1946 (older than 72 when the data was collected) labelled as *Elderly*. The number of respondents in each of these groups are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Number of respondents in each of the studied groups; Older Adults, Young and Elderly

Age group	n	%
Older Adults	707	27.33
Young Adults	1413	54.62
Elderly	330	12.76
No answer	137	5.30

Preliminary findings

A preliminary analysis of the data suggests that there are several differences between the age groups regarding how they experience reading their medical records in Journalen. Moreover, the analysis does not reveal any clear overarching pattern concerning the relationship between skills and experiences in comparison to the respondents' age.

The findings indicate that a more elaborate analysis of age-related differences in the experiences of using e-health services is needed in order to better understand user needs. This knowledge can, furthermore, be used to inform the development of new services as well as for refining the existing ones.

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