

### Technology and relational trust in care interactions

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**Purpose** The aim is to provide a deeper understanding of how digital medication technology influences the patient-staff relationship. **Method** A qualitative multi-case study in five municipalities, including semi-structured interviews with 21 healthcare professionals, was conducted. Inclusion criterion was experience with implementing digital medicine dispensers for home-dwelling service users. **Results & Discussion** Healthcare professionals reported three main technology-related impacts on their patient-caregiver relationships: 1) National and local pressure to increase efficiency had troubled their relationships with patients. The service recipients sometimes suspected that municipalities have sought to lower costs by reducing and digitalising services, and healthcare professionals had to consider such worries when introducing technologies to the recipient. 2) Participants reported a shift in care towards empowering patients. Digital technology can empower patients who value their independence, whereas a negative relationship could be the result if the care recipient felt the technology unsafe to use. 3) Surveillance by distance exposed excessive information about patients' everyday lives. Participants did not perceive this to be problematic, but rather opportunities for adjusting services to meet patients' needs, which again could improve their relationship to the care recipient. In conclusion, technologies such as digital medicine dispensers can improve the efficiency of healthcare services and enhance patients' independence when introduced in a way that empowers patients as well as safeguards trust and service quality (Marek et al., 2013). Conversely, the patient-caregiver relationship can suffer if the technology does not meet patients' needs and fails to offer safe and trustworthy services (Nilsen et al., 2016). Upon introducing technology, home healthcare professionals therefore need to carefully consider the benefits and possible disadvantages of the technology (Peek et al., 2016). Ethical implications for both individuals and societies need to be further discussed (Kiran et al., 2015).

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