

# Patients Narrative Telemonitoring: A Digital Diary Applied to Oncological Clinical Practice to Personalize Patient Care (Results from Pilot Studies)

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**Background and objectives:** Patients (P) narration applied to the care pathways embodies the P-centered care model. According to guidelines for the application of narrative medicine (1), three pilot studies on the use of narrative telemonitoring in oncological clinical practice were conducted (2,3). Objective of the studies was to evaluate feasibility (F) and utility (U) of a digital diary, a web-platform designed to collect and integrate P theme-oriented narratives with clinical data during therapeutic paths.

**Patients and Methods:** From 2017, 76 P affected by breast, colorectal and sarcoma cancer, undergoing chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery were asked to participate. Eligible criteria were: age  $\geq 18$  years, Italian-speaking, availability of an electronic device and an e-mail address. Through a guided narrative path, using their own language, P shared the impact of illness on their quality of life, their needs and expectations. Health care providers (HCP), 5 oncologists, 1 psychologist, and 7 nurses, telemonitored P by reading the stories, shared and used them to personalize the cure. P access was gained by invitation from HCP in accordance with health data confidentiality criteria. Ethics Committee approved the studies. A written informed consent was required. A semi-structured questionnaire (5-point level of agreement/disagreement Likert scale and open-ended questions) investigating F and U items was administered at the end of the study period (12 months) to P and HCP. PF items were: friendliness and easiness to diary, its adequacy in reflexive writing, compliance with diary; HCPF items were: diary friendliness and easiness, time saving, length of visit. PU items concerned: communication, cure relationship, awareness, self-confidence, empowerment; HCPU concerned: P communication and relationship, therapeutic alliance, illness/disease knowledge. A mixed qualitative and quantitative analysis methodology was used.

**Results:** 48 (63%) P used the digital diary; they were mostly female (78%) and aged 52 years (range 31-78) on average. Medium scores (SD) were high: PF 4.5/5.0 (0.77), HCPF 4.3/5.0 (0.64); PU 4.3/5.0 (0.86), HCPU 4.6/5.0 (0.54). P highest values (>4.5/5.0) concerns the opportunity to provide personal information and point of view. HCP strongest reported advantages were: the opportunity to disclose relevant data otherwise not detectable and to strengthen communication and care relationship. The diary also improved team relationship; both P and HCP recommended its use in clinical practice. Lack in participation was mainly due to technical problems or preference for talking orally.

**Conclusions:** Narrative telemonitoring is a useful tool in multidisciplinary daily cancer P care. Both P and HCP agreed on the F and U of the digital diary and strongly encouraged its introduction in clinical practice.

## **Bibliography**

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## **Notes:**

**Originality of the study:** The results of the present abstract are original and have not been previously published. Only partial and preliminary results have been published (see cited references).

**Conflict of interest:** The author Cristina Cenci is the owner of the company that provided the digital narrative platform used in the study. All the other authors have no conflict to declare.