

# Person-centered app helps women with breast cancer

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The face-to-face meetings between the patient and the care provider might be successfully complemented with person-centered e-support. A preliminary evaluation of breast cancer patients shows that a newly developed app can assist women undergoing treatment for breast cancer in handling symptoms and side effects and provide support.

A thesis at Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, has developed and preliminarily evaluated an interactive app for person-centered e-[support](#) that facilitates self-care. The app, called Care Expert, has been developed expressly for women undergoing treatment for [breast cancer](#) and contains functions for self-assessment of health and quality of life, self-monitoring, self-validation and direct reporting to the person's contact nurse.

## Scientifically based advice

The new app gives the [patients](#) support during cancer treatment, enabling them to identify any symptoms and treatment side effects that may occur and provide them with scientifically based advice for self-care customized to the person specific needs. The patient is also given the possibility to contact the healthcare team via the app by writing a personal message. Such continuous support is especially significant along with [early-stage breast cancer](#) treatment that essentially occurs in outpatient cancer care settings.

## **Feeling of support**

The evaluation shows that the women experienced an increased feeling of support and increased continuous access to the healthcare team while using the app.

"A major advantage with the prototype is that it integrates the patient's and the healthcare team's perspectives, which is a key to the success of e-support applications," Says PhD student Filipa Ventura at Sahlgrenska Academy.

## **Focus on the person**

One of the of the individual studies in the thesis where 226 women treated for breast cancer participated, shows that information on the diagnosis and treatment offered via computer based programs is insufficient to support the women's ability to handle their personal situation during cancer treatment, or to increase participation in their care.

Currently, there are a number of apps that have been developed to support cancer patients during treatment. Care Expert is the first that is designed following the principles of person-centered care, which places the focus on the person rather than the person's diagnosis.

## **Need for support**

"If e-support should meet the patients' needs, then they need be involved from the very beginning, otherwise there is a significant risk that the application will not be used or will increase the patient's burden instead of being supportive," says Filipa Ventura.

The thesis concludes that women undergoing [breast cancer treatment](#) need support, even if they are highly resourceful individuals. The provision of adequate support will assist [women](#) to handle the disease and treatment consequences, while strengthening their own motivation to actively participate in their care and [treatment](#).

**More information:** Link to the thesis: [hdl.handle.net/2077/39524](https://hdl.handle.net/2077/39524)

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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