

Needs and Expectations of Digital Support among Parents of Children in Child Healthcare

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Abstract : Introduction: Sweden has a national child health care program (CHCP) where all parents are offered support to raise their children and support them for lifelong health. A systematic review concludes that there is a request for guidance in using the internet effectively for the health purposes of their children. However, a study about internet use among young mothers means that the internet is not always easy to navigate for parents, and they may need support. To fill this gap and develop a digital channel to complement the child health care (CHC) for the support of parents of children within CHC, there is a demand to investigate parents' needs in relation to this purpose. Methods: The study had a qualitative approach using focus group interviews with parents. The interview data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Results: The main theme highlights that parents expected that a digital support channel would be something that might strengthen them toward independence concerning the care of their children in a positive way. However, they also felt that they needed personal support and that relationships with other parents and the child health care nurse were significant and meaningful. Another parental desire that emerged was that a future digital channel would facilitate and simplify access to care, and they suggested having both planned and urgent times available for parents to book. The digital channel was expected to make this possible and be a good complement to the physical contacts the traditional child healthcare currently offers. Discussion/conclusions: The parents in this study believed that digital solutions could increase their parental power in relation to the care of their children. Examples were given as nurse-led parent groups where parents with similar problems and experiences around their children could support each other and were expected to strengthen them over time. The parents stressed that a planned digital support channel also needs satisfactory solutions for both contact and response. It was suggested that there should be bookable times for both planned and urgent needs and also the possibility of rescheduling visits.

Keywords : child healthcare, parents, digital support, nursing

Conference Title : ICMCNEC 2023 : International Conference on Maternal-Child Nursing and Emergency Care

Conference Location : Vancouver, Canada

Conference Dates : May 22-23, 2023