

Digital home reduces emergency visits



Mitra Iranmahd, operations manager at Åkermymyntans medical center. Photo: Gabriel Bärlund

Measure your blood pressure at home. And avoid going to the hospital with acute heart failure. That's the idea behind a new major initiative in preventive digital healthcare.

500 patients linked to Åkermymyntans health center in Stockholm participating in the pilot study, which started in October and will run for six months.

Patients measure their value in the home, reports the online submit them to the health center and receive medical feedback from there. It's about patients with high blood pressure, heart failure, or mental health problems such as sleep disorders, anxiety and depression.

- By working proactively we can reduce the risk that patients will need to go to the emergency department with a more serious condition, said Alex Jaranka, leader of the project at Capio Proximity Care specialist in general.

Patients with high blood pressure cuff bracelets have got to be able to measure blood pressure on themselves at home. The data is transmitted via Bluetooth connection to an application of the phone and further via a cloud service to Åkermymtans medical center. Which sort a web platform values - and sound the alarm if they stand in the way at an alarming rate.

Patients with heart failure have had a similar bracelet - but also a wave to daily measure their weight.

- If one of our heart failure patients suddenly goes up two kilograms a week, we know that he or she begins to accumulate too much fluid. Then we put the water tablets, so that the patient does not end up in the emergency department. It saves so much suffering, says Mitra Iranmahd, operations manager at Åkermymtans medical center.

Patients communicate via text messaging and live video meetings with doctors and nurses at the health center.

Mitra Iranmahd talks about one of the participants in the study: A 70 plus lady previously put on hold and went to the health center on concerns about their health. Now she regularly measure their blood pressure in the comfort of home and chatting with doctors and nurses at the health center if necessary.

- The patient has learned what her ideal blood pressure is and how her body works. She tells us: "Now I'm my own doctor."

The project is done in collaboration with healthcare administrators in the Stockholm County Council. The technology delivered by Telia and its partners Imagine Care. The study will be evaluated by researchers at the Karolinska Institute.

Research group leader Carolina Wannheden the Medical Management Center at KI sees both opportunities and challenges of digital health measurements in the home.

- Patients can get a better understanding of their own health and how to take care of it, so they do not get more serious complications and ends up in hospital emergency departments. On the other hand, not all patients want or have the capacity to make their own measurements at home. It is important to ensure that digitization does not contribute to inequality in health care, she said.

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