



Reinventing professional roles and identities



Reinventing professional roles and identities:

how technology reshapes care practices in the
digital age

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Easy solutions...?

- Digital technologies as solutions for health system challenges
- Easy? → but what about the practical challenges?
- Impact on professional work and everyday caring
- Technological shift
 - Reconfigure professional roles
 - Consequences for how care is provided and received



Setting

Disability care in the Netherlands



- Digital triage by nurses at a triage center
 - Nurses, if needed, send a nurse or physician to patients
- Supervisors at residential groups:
 - Previously: calling the GP
 - Now: calling remote triage nurses
- Why? → GPs under pressure, lack of expertise, and a lack of knowledge by supervisors
- Non-traditional patient-healthcare provider interaction

Methods

- Ethnographic study
- Observations & interviews
 - Triage nurses
 - Supervisors and clients (people with disabilities) at residential groups
 - Managers & board members
- Sociotechnical perspective
- Routines and disruptions
 - Disruptions to routines and routines' ability to disrupt
 - How technology shapes routines or disrupts them

Results

Reshaping professional roles – nurses

- Traditional practice of nursing:
 - Touch, smell and sense: replaced by seeing and hearing
- Requires experienced nurses

1) Translating the care demand

- Articulating clinical advice

“Do we understand each other? I continuously have to gauge with each supervisor how best to articulate my advice” (triage nurse)

Results

2) Assessing the situation

- Capabilities of nurses at a distance

"Does supervisor X have the right competence and skills for my advice?" (triage nurse)

"Is all information about this patient provided?" (triage nurse)

3) Trust

- Care requires trust between patient and healthcare provider

- → between provider-provider at a distance

"Is it true what has been told so far? Sometimes it seems that the story shifts" (triage nurse)

Results

Reshaping professional roles – supervisors

- Privacy? (video or photo)
- Balancing between accepting advice and persuading

“This nurse did not have any knowledge about the target group [people with disabilities]. I really had to persuade her of the fact that my client needed medical attention” (supervisor)

- Impact on therapeutic relationship

“She [triage nurse] insisted that I should inspect the arm of my client by giving pressure. I unintentionally hurt him; it negatively affected my caring practices” (supervisor)

- Digital triage is challenging for clients

“I do not know who is on the other end of the line. I still call my own doctor or assistant” (client)

Conclusion

- Technology-enabled ways of organizing care have impact!
- Reshaping not only the act of caring but:
- (re)-creating routines of providing care
 - Inextricable: reshaping their roles and identities as nurse and supervisor
- Professionals require:
 - High levels of skill and experience
 - Trust
 - Adaptive capacity
- In turn:
 - Education
 - Reflexive monitoring of changing care relationships and roles



THANK YOU



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