LESS BUZZ MORE ACTION!
PATIENT EMPOWERMENT = RESPONSIBILITY + ADOPTION + INVOLVEMENT.

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses limitations of contemporary patient empowerment theory, particularly, poor translation of empowerment policies into practice. It is of special interest how we can encourage empowerment, that is patient participation in own health management, and improve patients' quality of life. An alternative approach to contemporary patient empowerment theory is proposed and initially tested. Experimental design is adopted for the data collection.

First, it is identified that existing empowerment theories take an outcome oriented approach to empowerment, where perceived control or mastery over certain actions are the desired outcomes. This approach lacks focus on understanding empowerment processes, e.g., the role of motivational orientation and associated goals that might affect participation in healthcare management at different stages of empowerment process. On the other hand, existing process approaches to empowerment lack clear distinction of important factors facilitating participation, and more importantly, lack empirical support for the role of those factors. Thus, this research aims at filling this research gap and at providing more precise explanation of empowerment processes.

Then, building on concepts of health responsibility perceptions, goal proximity and motivational goal orientations, new patient empowerment framework is proposed and supported with the initial data collected. In line with this new framework, two distinct pathways to empowerment are defined, each specific for individuals with either promotion or prevention goal orientation, and each showing a different strategy for adoption of empowering health management tools. It is believed that this proposed framework of how patient empowerment could materialize within everyday life can provide guidance for meeting diverse needs of involved stakeholders.

References available upon request.