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Digital Health Communication and Patient Engagement

Lauretta Ayayi Fubara[1*]

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ABSTRACT

This study examined digital health communication and patient engagement among patients in selected healthcare institutions in Melbourne, Australia. It aimed to determine the level of patient exposure to digital health platforms, assess engagement with digital health information, evaluate the relationship between exposure and engagement, and explore patients' perceptions of the credibility and usefulness of digital health communication. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving 200 adult patients selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured, validated, and pilot-tested questionnaire, and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation. Findings revealed that patients reported high exposure to digital health platforms, particularly telehealth services and online health information, and moderate-to-high engagement, with reading content the most frequent activity. A significant positive relationship ($r = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$) was observed between exposure and engagement, indicating that greater interaction with digital platforms promotes active participation. Patients generally perceived digital health information as credible and useful, though trust in platforms was slightly lower. These findings suggest that while digital health communication is widely accessed and valued, additional strategies are needed to enhance engagement, trust, and application of information. The study provides actionable recommendations for healthcare providers, institutions, and policymakers to optimize the use of digital health tools and strengthen patient-centered care.

INTRODUCTION

Digital health communication in Australia has expanded rapidly over the past decade, driven by rising internet penetration, mobile device use, and a policy push toward a more connected health system. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW, 2024) describes digital health as including tools such as telehealth, mobile applications, electronic health records, wearable devices, and online health information, which support consumers and providers to prevent illness, manage care, and improve health outcomes. This broad adoption reflects a national commitment to leveraging technology to connect patients with health services, yet it also reveals variations in how patients are exposed to and engage with these digital platforms. For example, national strategy reports highlight that while most Australians are digitally connected, improvements in digital health literacy and awareness are necessary to increase meaningful interaction with digital health tools, especially for priority populations such as First Nations peoples and rural communities (Australian Digital Health Agency, 2025).

Evidence suggests high exposure to digital health technologies among Australian consumers, with platforms like telehealth widely used. More than 90% of respondents in a recent survey reported telehealth use, though adoption of emerging technologies such as wearables and health apps varied by age, gender, education, and perceived usefulness (Thanthiriwattage *et al.*, 2025). This indicates that exposure is not uniform and is influenced by individual factors that shape access and adoption. Digital health maturity within primary care settings has also shown limitations; a national survey found that general practices scored below optimal levels across infrastructure, meaningful use, digital literacy, and readiness domains (Blake *et al.*, 2025). These findings imply that exposure to digital health platforms, whether through national systems like My Health Record or clinical tools in practice, is constrained by organizational and capacity challenges as much as by consumer factors.

Patient engagement with digital health information in Australia exhibits complexity. Research on digital experiences in primary care revealed that socioeconomic disadvantage and chronic disease shape barriers to accessing and benefiting from digital health, suggesting that engagement varies significantly across demographic groups (Choy *et al.*, 2024). International evidence further links digital health literacy with both awareness and use of online personal health records, showing that higher literacy predicts greater engagement and utilization of services, an insight that is transferable to the Australian context and highlights the role of skills and confidence in driving engagement (Cheng *et al.*, 2022). Additional narrative reviews identify patient empowerment, personalized content, and self-management as facilitators of engagement, while privacy concerns, digital literacy gaps, and usability challenges remain barriers (Madanian *et al.* 2023).

The relationship between exposure and engagement appears significant but mediated by literacy and perceptions of credibility. Patients' trust in digital health information

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[1] Comfort Home Care Pty Ltd, Australia
[*] Corresponding author's e-mail: laurettafub@gmail.com

and its perceived reliability influence how they interact with platforms and incorporate online health information into decision-making. The rapid proliferation of health information on social media has raised concerns about misinformation; for instance, research highlights that many Australians, particularly young adults, use platforms like Instagram and TikTok for mental health information, underscoring both the reach of digital communication and risks associated with unverified content (The Growth Distillery & Medibank, 2025). Credibility concerns have also prompted calls for health authorities and providers to ensure that digital content is accurate, secure, and user-focused. Overall, understanding how Australians perceive the usefulness and trustworthiness of digital health communication is essential for tailoring platforms that not only reach patients but also engage them in ways that support health behaviour, self-management, and informed decision-making.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital health communication and patient engagement have been widely examined across varied healthcare settings, revealing complex relationships among technology exposure, user behavior, and health outcomes. In the context of Australia and globally, digital health tools such as telehealth, electronic health records, mobile apps, and online portals have been shown to influence how patients access health information and interact with healthcare services (Krahe *et al.*, 2024). Research demonstrates that digital health literacy is a key component in supporting effective engagement, as individuals with higher digital literacy report enhanced use of web-based personal health records and greater confidence in navigating digital platforms for health purposes Cheng *et al.* 2022; Eppes *et al.*, 2023). Systematic reviews suggest that while digital platforms often achieve moderate levels of patient engagement and high acceptability, the evidence on their effectiveness in changing health behaviors or improving long-term outcomes remains mixed, pointing to the need for ongoing assessment and more robust study designs (Hu *et al.* 2026; Eppes *et al.*, 2023).

Telehealth has become a dominant focus within digital health research, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, with a large body of literature documenting both its rapid adoption and the barriers that persist in its implementation. A systematic review covering research from 2020 to 2025 found that provider and patient acceptance of telehealth remains high, yet challenges such as limited broadband access, digital literacy gaps, and workflow barriers continue to constrain equitable engagement, particularly among rural populations (Rabbani *et al.* 2025). Complementary to these findings, studies conducted in the Australian setting show low digital health maturity in general practice, where infrastructure, data literacy, and readiness levels vary widely and may limit patients' opportunities for meaningful interaction with digital health systems (Blake *et al.*, 2025).

Within the literature, digital health literacy emerges repeatedly as a foundational determinant of both exposure and engagement. Increased digital health literacy is consistently associated with greater willingness to engage with online health resources, use telehealth services, and apply digital information to self-management practices, yet disparities remain among older adults, rural residents, and lower socioeconomic groups (Yuen *et al.* 2024; Hawkins *et al.*, 2025). Rapid reviews also suggest that digital health literacy is positively linked to health outcomes, including chronic disease management behaviors and psychosocial indicators, but that further research is needed to understand these relationships across diverse populations and healthcare contexts (Yuen *et al.* 2024). Beyond literacy and access, patient perceptions of credibility and usefulness play a vital role. Perspective studies on digital health engagement emphasize the fragmented nature of patient involvement in technology design and data governance and call for more inclusive, patient-centered digital health ecosystems that build trust, ensure data privacy, and reflect users' preferences (West *et al.* 2025). Other research in patient experience literature highlights that while digital tools can improve communication quality and timeliness, variability in user trust and concerns about data security can influence how patients interpret and act on digital health information (Aytekin *et al.* 2025).

Together, these studies reveal several important gaps that have directly informed and motivated the conduct of the present research. Although prior literature acknowledges that patients are increasingly exposed to digital health platforms and that engagement with digital health information is growing, many studies examine exposure and engagement as separate phenomena. As a result, there is limited empirical evidence that clearly explains how varying levels of exposure to digital health communication platforms influence patient engagement outcomes, particularly within the Australian healthcare setting. This separation limits a comprehensive understanding of whether increased exposure necessarily translates into more active, meaningful, or sustained patient engagement.

Moreover, while digital health literacy is consistently identified as a factor associated with engagement, existing research provides insufficient examination of patients' perceptions of the credibility and usefulness of digital health communication. These perceptual factors are likely to shape not only how patients engage with digital information but also whether they choose to trust, adopt, or act upon the information they encounter. However, the literature rarely integrates these subjective evaluations into models that link exposure and engagement. Finally, there is a clear need for localized Australian evidence that simultaneously considers exposure to digital health communication, levels of patient engagement, and perceptions of credibility and usefulness. Addressing these gaps is essential for understanding the distinctive dynamics of digital health communication in Australia and for informing policies and practices that support effective patient engagement in an increasingly digital health environment.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in communication and engagement theories that explain how exposure to health information influences individual participation in health-related behaviors. In this study, digital health communication exposure is treated as the independent variable, while patient engagement is treated as the dependent variable. Digital health communication exposure refers to the extent to which patients encounter health information through digital platforms such as telehealth systems, mobile health applications, patient portals, and online health information sources. Prior literature suggests that increased exposure to digital health communication can shape patients' awareness, understanding, and attitudes toward health information, thereby influencing their willingness to interact with and use such information (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2024; Krahe *et al.*, 2024).

Patient engagement, as the dependent variable, reflects the degree to which patients actively seek, understand, trust, and apply digital health information in managing their health. Engagement includes behaviors such as accessing digital content, communicating with healthcare providers through digital channels, and using information to support decision-making and self-management. Studies indicate that engagement is not solely driven by availability of digital tools but is influenced by how patients perceive the relevance, credibility, and usefulness of the information they receive (Mahmood *et al.* 2025; Cheng *et al.*, 2022; Fitzpatrick, 2023). Research conducted in Australia further suggests that patients who are more frequently exposed to digital health communication platforms are more likely to participate actively in their care, provided they perceive the information as reliable and applicable to their needs (Blake *et al.*, 2025).

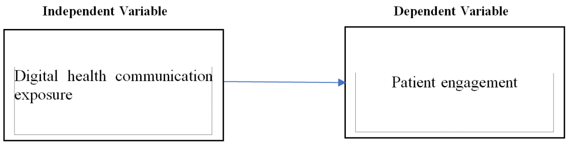

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

The framework assumes a directional relationship in which digital health communication exposure influences patient engagement. This relationship is supported by empirical evidence showing that greater exposure to digital health systems, such as national electronic health records and telehealth services, is associated with higher levels of interaction, confidence, and participation among patients (Eppes *et al.*, 2023; Thanthiriwattage *et al.*, 2025). At the same time, the framework recognizes that patient perceptions of credibility and usefulness shape how exposure translates into engagement, reinforcing the importance of examining these perceptions alongside behavioral outcomes. By focusing on the relationship between exposure and engagement, the conceptual framework aligns with the study's objectives of assessing exposure levels, engagement levels, their relationship, and patient perceptions within the Australian context.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between digital health communication and patient engagement among patients in selected healthcare institutions in Melbourne, Australia. In particular, the study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What is the level of patient exposure to digital health communication platforms?
2. What is the level of patient engagement with digital health information?
3. Is there a significant relationship between digital health communication exposure and patient engagement?
4. How do patients perceive the credibility and usefulness of digital health communication?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter presents the methodological approach adopted to examine the relationship between digital health communication and patient engagement among patients in selected healthcare institutions in Melbourne, Australia. It described the research design, study participants, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, procedures, ethical safeguards, and statistical methods employed. The methodological choices were guided by the study objectives and the need to generate reliable and valid empirical evidence.

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design. This design was appropriate because it allowed for the systematic measurement of digital health communication exposure and patient engagement at a single point in time. A quantitative approach enabled the collection of numerical data suitable for statistical analysis, facilitating the examination of relationships between variables and supporting objective interpretation of findings. The cross-sectional nature of the design was also efficient for capturing current patient experiences with digital health communication across multiple healthcare settings.

Participants and Sampling Techniques

The respondents of the study consisted of 200 adult patients receiving care in five selected public and private healthcare institutions in Melbourne, Australia. Participants were eligible if they were at least 18 years of age, had prior exposure to digital health communication platforms such as telehealth services, patient portals, or online health information, and provided informed consent to participate in the study. The sample size was determined using established quantitative research guidelines, which suggest that a minimum sample of 200 is appropriate for relational studies examining associations between variables and for achieving adequate statistical power in survey-based research (Rahi *et al.* 2019). A non-probability sampling approach, specifically convenience sampling, was employed due to practical considerations related to patient availability and access within clinical settings. This sampling technique is commonly used in healthcare research where patient recruitment is influenced by service delivery schedules and ethical constraints, and it is considered acceptable for exploratory and correlational investigations conducted in real-world healthcare environments (Silveira *et al.* 2025).

Data Gathering Tools

Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire developed based on existing literature on digital health communication and patient engagement. The instrument consisted of several sections covering respondent demographic characteristics, exposure to digital health communication platforms, levels of patient engagement, and perceptions of the credibility and usefulness of digital health information. All items were measured using a 4-point Likert-type scale to promote clarity of responses and facilitate statistical analysis. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire underwent content validation by five experts with extensive academic and professional experience in digital health, healthcare management, and health communication. Their feedback was used to refine item wording, relevance, and clarity. Following validation, the instrument was pilot tested with 30 respondents, a sample size considered adequate for pilot testing survey instruments to identify potential issues related to item interpretation, response patterns, and administration procedures (Bujang *et al.* 2024). Data obtained from the pilot test were subjected to reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha to assess internal consistency. The analysis yielded a coefficient of 0.982, indicating an excellent level of internal consistency and confirming that the questionnaire was reliable for use in the main study.

Data Gathering Procedures

Data collection was conducted over a specified period of 40 days, following approval from relevant institutional authorities. The questionnaires were distributed electronically via google forms. Participants were provided with clear instructions regarding the purpose of the study and the procedure for completing the questionnaire. Completed responses were collected, checked for completeness, and securely stored to maintain data integrity. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were allowed to withdraw at any stage without consequence.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Approval was obtained from the appropriate ethics review body prior to data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their rights as respondents, and the confidential handling of their information. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before participation. Anonymity was ensured by excluding personally identifiable information, and all data were used solely for academic research purposes.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were coded, entered, and analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, including means, and standard deviations, were used to describe respondents' levels of exposure and engagement. Inferential statistical techniques, such as correlation analysis, were employed to determine the relationship between digital health communication exposure and patient engagement. Appropriate tests were selected based on data distribution and measurement level, with statistical significance evaluated at an accepted alpha level. The results were presented in tables and interpreted in relation to the study objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the study on digital health communication and patient engagement among patients in selected healthcare institutions in Melbourne, Australia. It includes an analysis of patient exposure to digital health platforms, levels of engagement with digital health information, the relationship between exposure and engagement, and patients' perceptions of credibility and usefulness. The findings are interpreted in relation to the study objectives, with discussion of their implications for key stakeholders and comparison with relevant empirical studies.

Table 1 : Level of Patient Exposure to Digital Health Communication Platforms

Indicators	Mean	Std. Dev	Verbal Interpretation
Teleh-ealth services	3.52	0.61	High
Patient portals	3.34	0.68	High
Mobile health applications	3.21	0.72	Moderate
Online health information	3.47	0.65	High
Over-all Exposure	3.39	0.67	High

The data in Table 1 indicate that patients generally experience a high level of exposure to digital health communication platforms, with an overall mean score of 3.39 (SD = 0.67). Among the specific platforms, telehealth services recorded the highest exposure with a mean of 3.52 (SD = 0.61), followed closely by online health information websites at 3.47 (SD = 0.65), and patient portals at 3.34 (SD = 0.68). Mobile health applications showed slightly lower usage, with a mean of 3.21 (SD = 0.72). This pattern reflects the integration of telehealth into routine care and the widespread accessibility of online health resources in Melbourne, suggesting that patients have regular and consistent opportunities to interact with digital health information.

The implications of these findings are significant for multiple stakeholders. For patients, frequent exposure may enhance access to timely health information, potentially increasing dependence on digital platforms for health-related decision-making. Healthcare providers operate in a context where patients arrive already informed or partially informed via digital resources, which can affect clinical communication and the management of patient expectations. For healthcare institutions, high exposure translates into operational implications, including increased demand for digital infrastructure, technical support, and resource allocation to maintain platform functionality. Policymakers face implications for planning and regulation, as sustained exposure underscores the necessity of secure, reliable, and accessible digital health systems at a national level.

Furthermore, these results are consistent with findings by Thanthiriwattage *et al.* (2025) who observed widespread use of telehealth services and online health resources among Australian patients, indicating that high exposure to digital health platforms is a broader national trend. Similarly, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) documented extensive uptake of digital health services across the country, supporting the notion that patients are increasingly integrating digital platforms into their healthcare routines. In addition, Cheng *et al.* (2022) reported frequent engagement with patient portals among digitally literate populations, which aligns with the observed high exposure to online portals in this study. On the other hand, Krahe *et al.* (2024) noted that exposure can vary across institutions and regions, suggesting that while overall exposure is high, local organizational factors and infrastructure capacity may influence patient access. Collectively, these studies confirm the reliability of the current findings while also highlighting contextual factors that may modulate digital health exposure in specific healthcare settings.

Table 2 : Level of Patient Engagement with Digital Health Information

Indicators	Mean	Std. Dev	Verbal Interpretation
Reading digital health information	3.41	0.64	High
Communicating with providers digitally	3.29	0.69	Moderate
Using information for decision making	3.18	0.71	Moderate
Following digital health information	3.22	0.68	High
Overall Exposure	3.28	0.68	Moderate

Table 2 shows that patients engage moderately to highly with digital health information, with an overall mean of 3.28 (SD = 0.68). Among the specific indicators, reading digital health information is the most frequent form of engagement, with a mean of 3.41 (SD = 0.64), followed by following digital health guidance at 3.22 (SD = 0.68). In contrast, actively using digital information for decision-making scored slightly lower at 3.18 (SD = 0.71), and communicating with healthcare providers through digital channels averaged 3.29 (SD = 0.69). These results suggest that while patients are attentive to digital health information, translation into actionable engagement behaviors such as applying information in decision-making or interacting with providers is comparatively limited.

The implications of these findings are significant for key stakeholders. For patients, this pattern may result in partial utilization of available digital health resources, potentially affecting the effectiveness of self-management and informed decision-making. Healthcare providers may experience variability in patient participation, which could influence adherence to care plans and the overall efficiency of digitally mediated interactions. Institutions could face uneven uptake of digital programs designed to support patient self-management, impacting the allocation of resources and planning of patient-centered digital initiatives. Policymakers may recognize that even high exposure and basic engagement do not automatically translate into meaningful health outcomes, indicating that additional strategies may be necessary to support behavioral engagement with digital tools.

Furthermore, these findings are consistent with previous research. For instance, Eppes *et al.* (2023) reported that while digital health platforms were widely accepted, patient engagement remained moderate, reflecting similar patterns observed in the present study. In addition, Fitzpatrick (2023) noted that patient interaction with digital health information is often informational rather than behavioral, which aligns with the lower scores for decision-making and provider communication observed here. Similarly, Blake *et al.* (2025) found comparable engagement patterns in primary care settings, where patients frequently accessed digital information but did not consistently translate it into actions that affected care outcomes. On the other hand, Hawkins *et al.* (2025) reported higher levels of engagement among younger populations, suggesting that demographic characteristics such as age may influence engagement intensity and explaining some variation observed in the current findings. Collectively, these studies provide a broader context for understanding patient engagement in digital health, indicating that exposure and basic interaction are necessary but not sufficient conditions for fully effective digital health participation.

The correlation in Table 3 demonstrates a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between patient exposure to digital health communication platforms and their level of engagement, with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of r = 0.74 and p < 0.001. This indicates that as patients' exposure to digital health platforms increases, their engagement with health information and digital services also rises. In other words, frequent interaction with telehealth services, patient portals, mobile health applications, and online health resources promotes more active participation in health-related activities. For patients, this strong relationship suggests greater involvement in their own care when they are consistently exposed to digital health information, which may improve self-management and informed decision-making. Healthcare providers may experience enhanced patient responsiveness, as higher exposure fosters a willingness to interact with digital services and follow recommended care plans. For healthcare institutions, the correlation implies increased utilization of digital health resources, potentially requiring expanded infrastructure, staff support, and integration of technology into routine care delivery. Moreover, for policymakers, the strong positive association may highlight exposure as a measurable factor that can shape national health engagement strategies, influencing decisions related to funding, digital literacy initiatives, and healthcare policy development.

Table 3 : Relationship between Digital Health Communication Exposure and Patient Engagement

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Exposure and Engagement	0.74	<0.001	Significant positive relationship

These results align with previous research. For instance, Cheng *et al.* (2022) reported that greater exposure to digital health records predicted higher engagement levels among patients, reinforcing the current finding that exposure is closely tied to active participation. Similarly, Thanthiriwattage *et al.* (2025) observed a positive association between the use of digital platforms and patient involvement in care. In addition, Krahe *et al.* (2024) reported comparable relationships within Australian healthcare settings, suggesting that institutional digital strategies can enhance engagement outcomes. In contrast, Rosenlund *et al.* (2023) found weaker correlations in environments with limited digital support, indicating that organizational context and available infrastructure can modulate the strength of the relationship between exposure and engagement. Overall, these findings reiterate the importance of providing patients with consistent and accessible digital health information, as well as ensuring supportive environments to maximize engagement.

Table 4 demonstrates that patients generally perceive digital health communication as credible and useful, with an overall mean score of 3.30 (SD = 0.67). The credibility of information received the highest rating at 3.36 (SD = 0.63), followed closely by accuracy of content at 3.31 (SD = 0.66). Usefulness for health management was slightly lower at 3.28 (SD = 0.69), and trust in digital platforms recorded the lowest score at 3.24 (SD = 0.71). These results suggest that while patients generally accept digital health information and recognize its reliability, there is some caution regarding platform trustworthiness.

Table 4 : Patients' Perception of the Credibility and Usefulness of Digital Health Communication

Indicators	Mean	Std. Dev	Verbal Interpretation
Credibility of information	3.36	0.63	High
Accuracy of content	3.31	0.66	high
Usefulness for health management	3.28	0.69	Moderate
Trust in digital platforms	3.24	0.71	Moderate
Overall Perception	3.30	0.67	High

The implications for stakeholders are notable. Patients may respond selectively to digital health information, relying primarily on sources they perceive as accurate, which may influence the degree to which they integrate this information into their healthcare decisions. Healthcare providers may observe variability in how patients utilize digital guidance, affecting clinical discussions and adherence to care plans. Healthcare institutions could encounter differential usage patterns, with certain platforms being more frequently accessed based on perceived credibility and reliability, which may influence planning for digital services and patient education. For policymakers, the findings indicate that public perception of trust and usefulness should inform regulatory frameworks, particularly concerning digital platform security, content standards, and strategies to enhance patient confidence in digital health tools.

These findings align with previous research. For example, Fitzpatrick (2023) reported that patients' positive perception of digital health information was closely tied to the quality and reliability of the content. Similarly, Choy *et al.* (2024) found that perceived credibility directly influenced levels of patient engagement, suggesting that trust in the information source is central to effective digital health interaction. Eysenbach *et al.* (2001) observed that concerns about data security and trust significantly reduced patient reliance on digital platforms, which corresponds to the slightly lower trust scores reported in the present study. Furthermore, a report by The Growth Distillery and Medibank (2025) revealed that patients often exhibit skepticism toward social media as a health information source, supporting the observation that platform type can affect patient perception and usage patterns. Overall, these studies indicate that credibility, accuracy, and trust are interrelated factors shaping patient engagement with digital health communication, and they reiterate the importance of maintaining reliable, secure, and transparent digital health services.

CONCLUSIONS

The study examined digital health communication and patient engagement among patients in selected healthcare institutions in Melbourne, Australia. Based on the findings, several conclusions were drawn in relation to the study's four research objectives. First, patients generally reported a high level of exposure to digital health communication platforms, particularly telehealth services and online health information websites, while engagement with mobile health applications was slightly lower. This indicates that digital tools are becoming an integral part of routine healthcare interactions. Second, patients demonstrated moderate to high engagement with digital health information, with the highest engagement in reading content, but lower engagement in applying information to decision-making or communicating digitally with providers. This shows that access to information does not always translate into actionable engagement. Third, there was a strong positive relationship between exposure to digital health communication and patient engagement, suggesting that greater exposure directly contributes to higher engagement levels. Frequent interaction with digital platforms promotes active participation in healthcare. Finally, patients generally perceived digital health communication as credible and useful, with the highest ratings for information credibility and content accuracy, while trust in platforms was slightly lower. This suggests that patients value accurate information but remain cautious regarding the reliability of certain digital sources.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Healthcare institutions and policymakers should expand access to mobile health applications and digital platforms by promoting user-friendly interfaces, interactive modules, and reminder systems. Educational campaigns and brief training sessions can improve patient familiarity and ensure more consistent exposure to digital health tools.
2. Providers should implement structured digital engagement programs, such as guided teleconsultations, interactive patient portals with decision-support features, and gamified health management systems. Progress-tracking feedback mechanisms can encourage patients to move from passive information consumption to active application in healthcare decision-making.
3. Institutions should develop integrated communication strategies that combine multiple digital channels to ensure continuous and relevant patient engagement. Personalized reminders, follow-ups, and tailored educational content can strengthen participation. Policymakers may support these efforts by setting digital communication standards and funding initiatives that expand access, particularly for underserved populations.
4. Strong data security measures, regularly updated content, and clear source attribution are essential to build trust. Providers should direct patients to verified platforms and explain the clinical relevance of digital information, while policymakers may establish accreditation systems to enhance credibility and promote wider adoption.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest associated with the conduct, authorship, or publication of this study.

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