Health Promotion in the Digital Era: A Critical Commentary

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Résumé :

A range of digitised health promotion practices have emerged in the digital era. These include the use of smartphone apps, wearable devices, social media and patient self-monitoring technologies. Some of these practices are voluntarily undertaken by people who are interested in improving their health and fitness, but many others are employed in the interests of organisations and agencies. This talk provides a critical commentary on digitised health promotion. I begin with an overview of the types of digital technologies that are used for health promotion, and follow this with a discussion of the socio-political implications of such use. It is contended that many digitised health promotion strategies focus on individual responsibility for health and fail to recognise the social, cultural and political dimensions of digital technology use. The increasing blurring between voluntary health promotion practices, professional health promotion, government and corporate strategies requires acknowledgement, as does the increasing power wielded by digital media corporations over digital technologies and the data they generate. These issues provoke questions for health promotion as a practice and field of research that hitherto have been little addressed.