**Author’s declarative title:** A Qualitative Descriptive study to explore paediatric oncology patients readiness and preferences towards using a mobile health application for supportive pain management.

**Commentary on:**

Madi D, Abi Abdallah Doumit M, Hallal M, Moubarak MM. Outlooks on using a mobile health intervention for supportive pain management for children and adolescents with cancer: a qualitative study. BMC Nurs. 2023 Sep 4;22(1):301. doi: 10.1186/s12912-023-01461-z. . .

**Commentary**

***Implications for practice and research***

* Mobile health (mHealth) applications could provide a vehicle for helping children and young people to establish social support networks and a sense of connectedness. Further research is required to consider whether and how mobile health applications could be implemented within the UK health system to support children and young people’s pain management.

***Context***

Pain can impact cancer patients’ recovery and quality of life by compromising their physiological and psychological state1.. It is recognised that paediatric pain undertreatment remains an ongoing concern2.. Social support can act as a method of pain management,promote treatment adherence and wellbeing3. The study by Madi and colleagues4 considers readiness and preferences towards the use and acceptability of a mobile health (mHealth) application, focussed on social assistance and peer support, to enable supportive pain management for children and adolescents with cancer.

***Methods***

The purpose of the study4 was to investigate the acceptability of an mHealth application for supportive pain management and evaluate the benefits of developing a digital platform for supportive pain management amongst children and adolescents with cancer in Lebanon. A qualitative descriptive design was utilized whereby purposeful sampling was employed to recruit twelve participants between 9 and 17 years, diagnosed with any type of cancer and receiving treatment at the Children Cancer Center, American University of Beirut, Data was collected using semi-structured in-depth interviews. These were analysed by two researchers using conventional content analysis whereby data was coded, categorized, organized into meaningful clusters and themes obtained from the data. Data collection and analysis occurred concurrently until data saturation was met.

***Findings***

Four major categories were identified. The findings suggest the need for children and young people with cancer to feel connectedness with others experiencing the same condition. This emphasizes the need for patients to have other individuals who can listen to their needs. Participants reported that they were willing to utilize an mHealth application which was a new concept to Lebanese culture but there were some anxieties regarding its use and how confidentiality would be maintained. Suggestions were made that an mHealth application could have a 3D approach to enable face-to-face conversations. Barriers to developing a digital platform included fear of disease-related shame or pity in addition to technology-factors including language barriers, the use of phone memory to download and ease of use.

***Commentary***

This study highlighted the perceptions towards the acceptability and development of an mHealth application as a form of pain management support for children and young people with cancer.,It demonstrated that a digital platform could act as a means to socially connect with and feel supported by other cancer patients However, this is reliant on participants wanting to accept support and the support being perceived as being given with empathy. This could potentially be generalizable to the UK whereby technology is readily available and such an application could be embedded into pain management care plans.

It is important to recognize that mHealth applications need to be designed for the target population whilst ensuring evidence-based information is provided. There is a high risk of bullying and fear in relation to social support applications more generally and this would need to be addressed before any application for a health condition amongst potentially vulnerable young people could be launched. If such an application was to be implemented with the UK monitoring by healthcare professionals would be required to ensure any misleading information could be corrected and patients’ concerns answered. However this could lead to concerns regarding the level of engagement by children and young people of a system for which they may feel they do not have ownership or privacy.

Overall, the findings of the study have implications for other countries since use of an mHealth application within the UK could be a useful tool to support children and young people’s pain management during cancer treatment. However some caution is required as further research is needed regarding the cultural and social acceptability of mHealth applications and their integration with different healthcare systems.w~~hether this would be culturally acceptability~~

**References**

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**Competing interests** No, there are no competing interests