

THE ROLE OF PERCEIVED RISK IN TELEMEDICINE ADOPTION

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Introduction: Research findings suggest that the acceptance of telemedicine technologies by medical staff are determined by the perception of the risks involved. The question that is raised is: how do field experts and medical staff actually perceive these risks and what kind of risks do they distinguish?

Objective: To provide an analytical framework that categorizes the different types of risk in telemedicine services.

Method: Domains on which to categorize the risks of telemedicine have been defined on the basis of a literature database search. Subsequently, a first framework of the perception of these categories was made. Open interviews have been conducted with field-experts in order to validate the results.

Results: Preliminary findings suggest that the domains which form the perceived risks in telemedicine adoption are: security, technical and medical risks and the risks following from the perceived usefulness and ease of use. These risks can be rated according to an estimation of the perceived severity. The estimations based on literature as well as field-expert interviews, are presented in a diagram which has the various risks on one axis and a severity rating of 'high', 'medium', and 'low' on the other.

Conclusion: The estimations have shown that the perceived security, technical and medical risks are dependent of each other to such a degree that a separate judgment is difficult to maintain. When these are considered collectively, the differences in assessments between the literature and the field-experts can be explained by the expert-opinion that the technical difficulties resulting in these perceived risks will surely be solved when the number of telemedicine projects grows. Perceived ease of use has not been given a clear ranking by the expert, which is explained by the chosen medium and the design of the user interface. More expert opinions will be necessary to add to the diagram.

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