

Self-tracking – health promotion or narcissism?

Ultrashort on the state of art

- Quantified self (QS) movement started in 2007
- >140 000 health apps worldwide
- Self-trackers Xmas gift of the year 2014 in Sweden
- Health apps now in the basic supply of many smartphones



Ultrashort on the state of art, cont'd

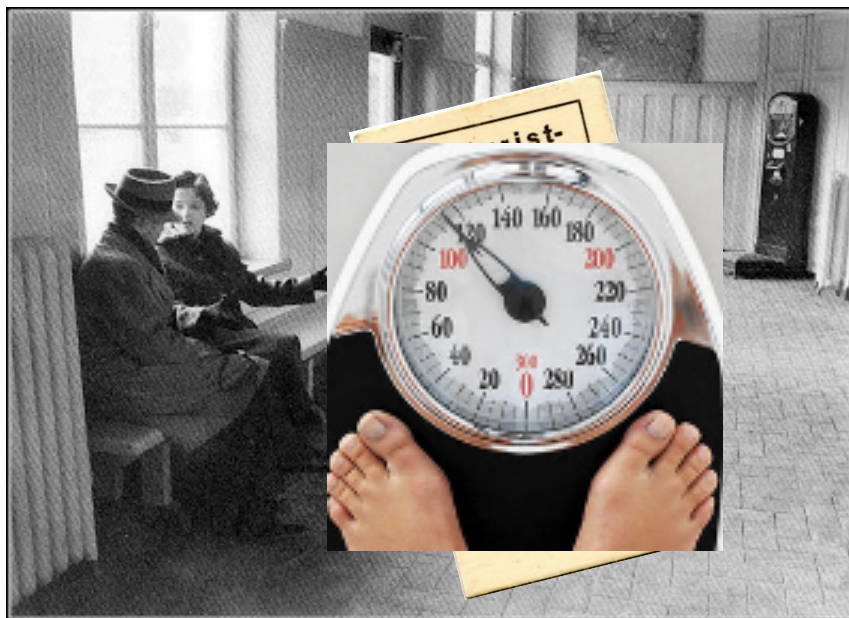
- Sara Riggare, a young Parkinson patient and self-monitoring promotor selected as the most influential person i Swedish medtech



Why a Smer project on self-tracking?

- New technique with well-defined and exciting ethical challenges
- No previous ethical analysis
- No other present actors
- Target group including the young





Self-monitoring of blood sugar



The Economist

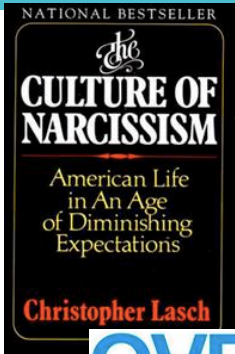
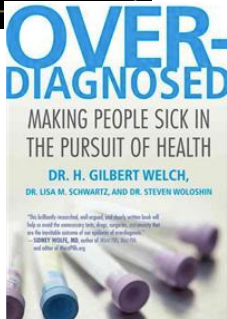
2012

"They are an eclectic mix of early adopters, fitness freaks, technology evangelists, personal-development junkies, hackers and patients suffering from a wide variety of health problems."

Possible beneficial effects

- Promoting healthy behaviour, strengthening self-esteem, new approach to public health
- Early detection of disease
- Monitoring and alleviating disease, patient empowerment
- Supporting patient network (e.g. PatientsLikeMe)
- Overwhelming support in the net communities (cf. poor scientific support)

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Adverse effects of self-tracking in healthcare?

- Narcissistic culture – narcissistic individuals
- The monitoring constantly reminds about having disease(s) – focus of life shifted from health to disease.
- Overquantified self – neurotic behaviour
- Increasing number of alarms, most of them false positive (anxiety, resource-consuming)

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The image of the patient






Anton Grunberg, prize-awarded Dutch author
Latest novel *Het Bestand*

Integrity, responsibility, resources

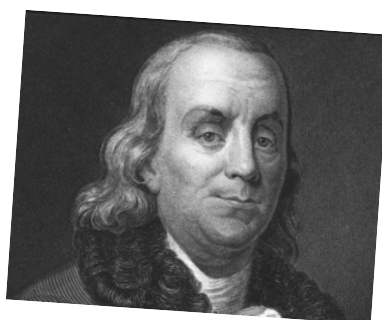
- Integrity: Who owns, who disposes? Need for regulation?
- Risk for hacking healthcare computer systems via health apps?
- The responsibility of healthcare
- The ability and capacity in healthcare to deal with alarms – smarter handling, priority-setting

Other uses of self-tracking (with ethical implications)

- Commercial use
- Employers
- Insurance companies
- Judiciary system
- Etc..

Need för regulation?

Do they have in common?



Citizen science based on self-tracking: New ethical issues

(crowd-sourced science, civic science, volunteer monitoring, networked science)

- Participants: Blurred distinction between researchers and study subjects
- Subject to the Ethical Review Act? Ethical vetting required?
- Who is in control of the databases? How is the integrity of the participants protected?
- Risk for dissemination of non-validated, erroneous, manipulated results

Citizen science: Foldit



nature

Vol 466 | 5 August 2010 | doi:10.1038/nature09304

Predicting protein structures with a multiplayer online game

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