

Abstract

Patient engagement describes the patient's active involvement in his health management and well-being. The strategy is associated with a variety of positive effects on the patient's healthcare outcomes. In this context, mobile health applications are one possible way to enhance this patient-oriented approach. As the use of such health applications is associated with risks of data privacy, malfunctioning, and misdiagnosis, the role of trust in these applications is crucial. We investigated the role of usability and social presence for initial trust in mobile healthcare applications in a 2×2 between-subject experiment. Fifty-six participants interacted with one of four health application prototypes which varied in usability and social presence. As dependent variables we measured trusting belief, trusting intentions, and trust-related behaviors. Our study suggested no evidence for a relationship between usability or social presence on trust in health application. The work points out the relevance of the research topic. We propose that other factors might play a more important role for trust as well as discuss several limitations of our study.

Keywords: trust, health application, mobile, usability, social presence