

Peer Review Report

Review Report on The mediating role of digital competence in the associations between the factors affecting healthcare utilization and access to care

Original Article, Int J Public Health

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EVALUATION

Q 1 Please summarize the main findings of the study.

The main findings of the study can be seen as a multivariate analysis that explores the simultaneous presence of several seemingly non-corrective factors such as longstanding activity limitation, impaired cognitive functioning, poor health and mental distress on the one hand and the presence of digital skills on the other. In addition, it focuses on outcomes of concern, such as whether people from the described disadvantaged groups are most in need of health care and the significant risk of not receiving the health services they need, and the growth of such (digital) inequalities with the expansion of digital services. The other important finding is formulated in conclusions: "... one way to increase access to care among vulnerable groups is to increase their digital competence"

Q 2 Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

Strengths and limitations are described quite well by the authors in the corresponding block. The undoubted strength is the scale and quality of the statistical sample. The main limitation that should be pointed out is the single and rather general question (assessment of respondent's digital competence to use online services (on computer or mobile devices)), which tests the level of digital competence.

Q 3 Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.

The methods used in the study are up-to-date and sufficient for the level of the objectives of the study. The sample size is more than sufficient for the purposes of the study.

The study can be reproduced on the basis of the described methodology. The results are clearly formulated, the main conclusions are highlighted and specific directions are outlined, which will allow, if not to solve the problem raised by the study, at least to significantly reduce its size. The data are interpreted correctly, references are provided in sufficient quantity, and there are no comments on their quality.

Insufficient understanding of the real level of digital competence of the respondents can be considered as the main comment. In further research, the number of questions related to digital competence should be expanded to a separate block containing at least 5 questions. To define the questions themselves, it would be better to use the Digital Competence framework for citizens 2.2

(<https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128415>), of course only those parts of it that deal with basic skills and digital communication (Information and data literacy, Communication and collaboration, Safety – especially in part Protecting health and well-being).

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4 Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

Yes

Q 5 Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes

Q 6 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

Yes

Q 7 Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Yes.

Q 8 Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)

Mostly

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 9 Originality



Q 10 Rigor



Q 11 Significance to the field



Q 12 Interest to a general audience



Q 13 Quality of the writing



Q 14 Overall scientific quality of the study



REVISION LEVEL

Q 15 Please make a recommendation based on your comments:

Accept.