

A digital solution for better heart health: tailored support for people living with coronary heart disease

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Abstract

One in three heart attacks are repeat events, yet only a quarter of people in Australia with acute coronary syndromes receive optimal care at hospital discharge to support them to live well with heart disease.

Solution

Using human-centred design principles, we co-designed an evidence-based digital patient support program to meet the information and support needs of people living with coronary heart disease. The free MyHeart MyLife program provides tailored information and practical resources via an online dashboard, together with email and SMS support, to help participants better understand and manage their condition. The program is tailored to time since diagnosis, whether the person lives in a rural/remote area and whether they are a patient or carer. Participants also gain access to the MyHeart MyLife online peer support community.

Results

3,242 people have joined the program since August 2024. Early evaluation shows that, since joining, 80% of participants have made dietary improvements, 86% report improved knowledge and understanding of their heart condition, 56% have reduced their alcohol intake, and there has been an average increase in physical activity. It also shows a decrease in unhealthy days of an average of 1.8 days per month.

Conclusion

Being diagnosed with coronary heart disease is a life-changing experience. Patients' readiness to take on new information, and the type of information and support they need, changes over the course of their recovery. A tailored digital support program can meet these changing needs and may help improve short-term cardiovascular outcomes, self-efficacy and quality of life.