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## **Perceptions of the Electronic Holistic Needs Assessment (eHNA) for people with breast cancer: The potential for value or paradox**

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### **Background**

Holistic Needs Assessments (HNA) were designed following national recognition in the United Kingdom (UK) of the physical, psychosocial and practical challenges associated with a cancer diagnosis (National Cancer Survivorship Initiative, 2013; National Health Service, 2019). Macmillan Cancer Support's electronic HNA (eHNA) provides a widely used digital platform for healthcare professionals to support people's needs (Ipsos Mori, 2015), yet few studies have explored user perspectives of this. This study aimed to consider the value of the eHNA from patient and healthcare professional viewpoints.

### **Methods**

A qualitative case study approach was adopted with two NHS Trusts in England; 24 women with breast cancer and 24 staff were recruited. Data from semi-structured interviews, observations, and eHNA-related documentation were compiled into cases around use of the eHNA in each organisation. Principles of Framework Analysis and Normalisation Process Theory enabled identification of conclusions.

### **Results**

The eHNA's contribution to patient's experiences of support was complex, and dependent on various influences: i) how the patient's own views and judgements influenced their perceptions of the assessment, ii) how the views of staff delivering the eHNA influenced both their own approach to the assessment, and patient views, and iii) the organisational context and culture.

### **Conclusion**

Apparent superficial implementation of eHNAs seemed to facilitate organisational cultures of evidencing the actions of staff and achieving regional/national targets. The patient's views towards the eHNA appeared paradoxical, as most patients perceived the eHNA to be meaningful 'in principle' but reported little benefit or negative outcomes in reality, suggesting a need for culture change that moves away from task-orientated approaches, and towards the facilitation of meaningful, personalised, conversations.

### **References**

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