Health anxiety in the digital age

Goysdotter, Moa

2015

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

• Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
• You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
• You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.
Health anxiety in the digital age
Moa Goysdotter

Health anxiety is a growing health problem that in a number of studies have been shown to correlate with increased digitization and amount of information on the Internet (e.g. Baumgartner & Hartmann 2011). The new diagnosis "cyberchondria" is used to describe people with health anxiety who use the Internet excessively to search for health information. The concept however, only explains a portion of the health anxiety problem emerging in the digital culture. An important part of the problem is the shift of responsibility where the individual is expected to take more and more responsibility for their own health (Lewis 2006). A symptom of this shift in responsibility is Quantized Self (QS)-technology by which biological bodily data is made accessible to users who in general are not educated in interpreting biological data. Eugene Thacker means that the human biological body and the computer no longer are possible to separate (2004) and this anthropomorphic relation is something that can be studied in the emerging movement around QS-technology that is called "self-hacking". Self-hackers use QS-technology in order to "optimize" their bodily organisms and "hack" and control” them as if they were computers.

Health anxiety in the digital age consists of a combination of different relations between mankind and technology where the body is of central importance. By examining the emerging digital health anxiety from Don Ihde’s three technology relations; background relations, hermeneutic relations, and alterity relations (Ihde 1990) I will try to deepen the understanding of health anxiety in the digital age, and complement the previous research made on "cyberchondria".

References:

Baumgartner, Susanne E. & Hartmann, Tilo, "The Role of Anxiety in Online Health Information Search”, Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 14:10, 2011.


Referenslista

Aiken, Mary, Kirvan, Grainne, Berry, Mike & O’Boyle, Ciaran A. "The Age of Cyberchondria", Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland Student Medical Journal, 5, 2012.

Baumgartner, Susanne E. & Hartmann, Tilo, "The Role of Anxiety in Online Health Information Search", Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 14:10, 2011.


Coleman, Deirdre & Fraser, Hilary (red.), Minds, Bodies, Machines, 1770-1930, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.


Haskell, Yasmin (red.), Diseases of the imagination and imaginary disease in the early modern period, Turnhout:Brepols, 2011.


Richardt, Susanne, Methaphor in languages for special purposes : the function of conceptual metaphor in written expert language and expert-lay communication in the domains of economics, medicine and computing, Frankfurt am Main;Lang, 2005.
