

A simulation pilot study of health optimisation for patients with bipolar disorders:

An emerging role for clinical pharmacists as decision coaches

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Background

Patients with bipolar disorders may experience suboptimal treatment due to ineffective medicines, over-treatment, adverse drug reactions and non-adherence. To ensure optimal treatment for each patient, a holistic approach to shared decision making supported by technologies has been proposed. Our health optimisation system (DECIDE, <https://www.decidetreatment.org>) enables patients, healthcare providers and caretakers to collaborate in selecting, managing, assessing and following up treatment. In shared decision making a decision coach is an emerging role in informing, supporting and guiding patients. Clinical pharmacists might be uniquely positioned for this role.

Objective

To explore the role of the pharmacists as decision coaches and to simulate the implementation of a health optimisation system in a pilot study

Methods

- ✓ A literature review, qualitative interviews with psychiatrists and patients, and multidisciplinary focus groups were conducted to establish the pharmacist role, to produce training programs, and to design a simulation pilot study.
- ✓ A role-play simulation with eight healthcare professionals, where clinical courses normally taking years were streamlined to two weeks, were conducted.
- ✓ Focus groups and semi-structured interviews based on activity theory were used to explore and validate the implementation process.

Results

The literature review revealed that the role of pharmacists as decision coaches had yet to be fully explored.

The developed pharmacist role consisted of:

- ✓ collecting patients' medication history and performing a structured medication management review
- ✓ checking medical records and patients' beliefs about effects and adverse drug reactions of medicines used
- ✓ entering the obtained information into DECIDE
- ✓ educate, support and following up the patient in benefiting from DECIDE

The participants believed that:

- ✓ a decision coach could result in higher quality of treatment and save time for the physicians
- ✓ the training-program was useful and appeared to save time in implementation of DECIDE

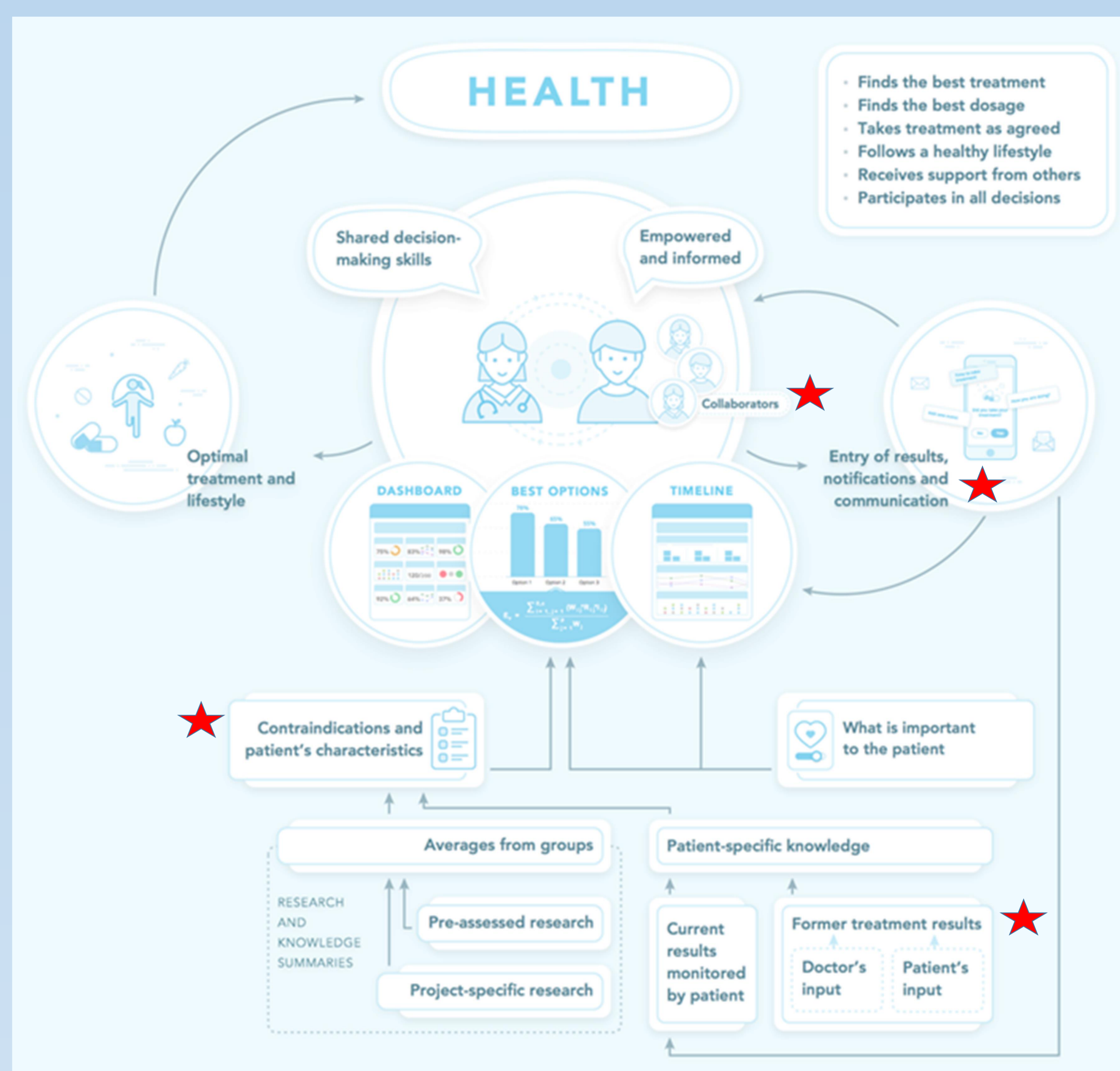


Fig. 1: A model for health optimisation supported by health optimisation technologies. Red stars indicating pharmacist involvement.

Conclusion

The role for pharmacists as decision coaches was perceived to be potentially useful and feasible. The role-play simulation model could facilitate implementation of DECIDE in the clinical ward.

