

Service user interviews of psychiatric patients about uses of e-media: Experiences as co-researcher

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BACKGROUND

The current study is part of a larger project called PsyConnect. We are currently developing an online tool for coping with mental health issues and interaction with healthcare providers. The tool will be implemented and tested with 40 service users in 2013 and evaluated in 2014. Service users are involved in all parts of the study.

The current presentation focuses on:

The 1st author's experiences in the role of co-researcher during an interview study about e-media among service users in mental health.

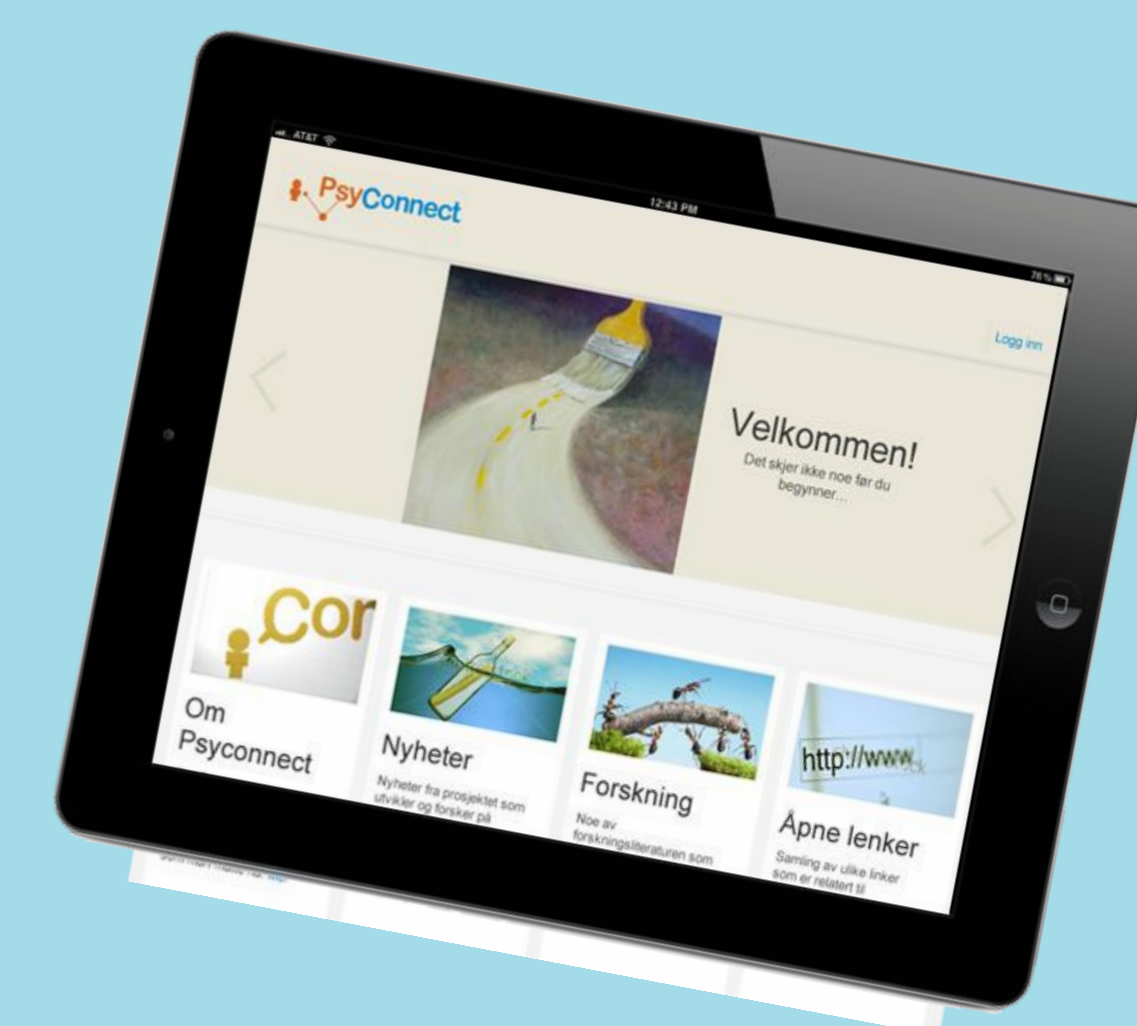
APPROACH

Co-researcher involvement in all phases including:

- Development of a semi-structured interview guide, information and consent form
- Approval by the Oslo University data protection agency
- Contacted hospital management to inform about the study
- Called and arranged times for visiting the different wards
- Presented the project and interview study for personnel and patients at the closed wards
- Recruited those who were willing to be interviewed
- Those interviewed received a gift certificate (approx 7 EURO) at the user-driven cafe at the hospital
- A total of 39 patients were interviewed: 25 in hospital wards, 10 admitted to an inpatient clinic, and 4 living at home.

THEMES IN INTERVIEW

- Experiences with internet and mobile phones
- Sources of information about their health
- Collaboration with health personnel
- Involvement in documenting their condition
- Individual plans
- Demographic data

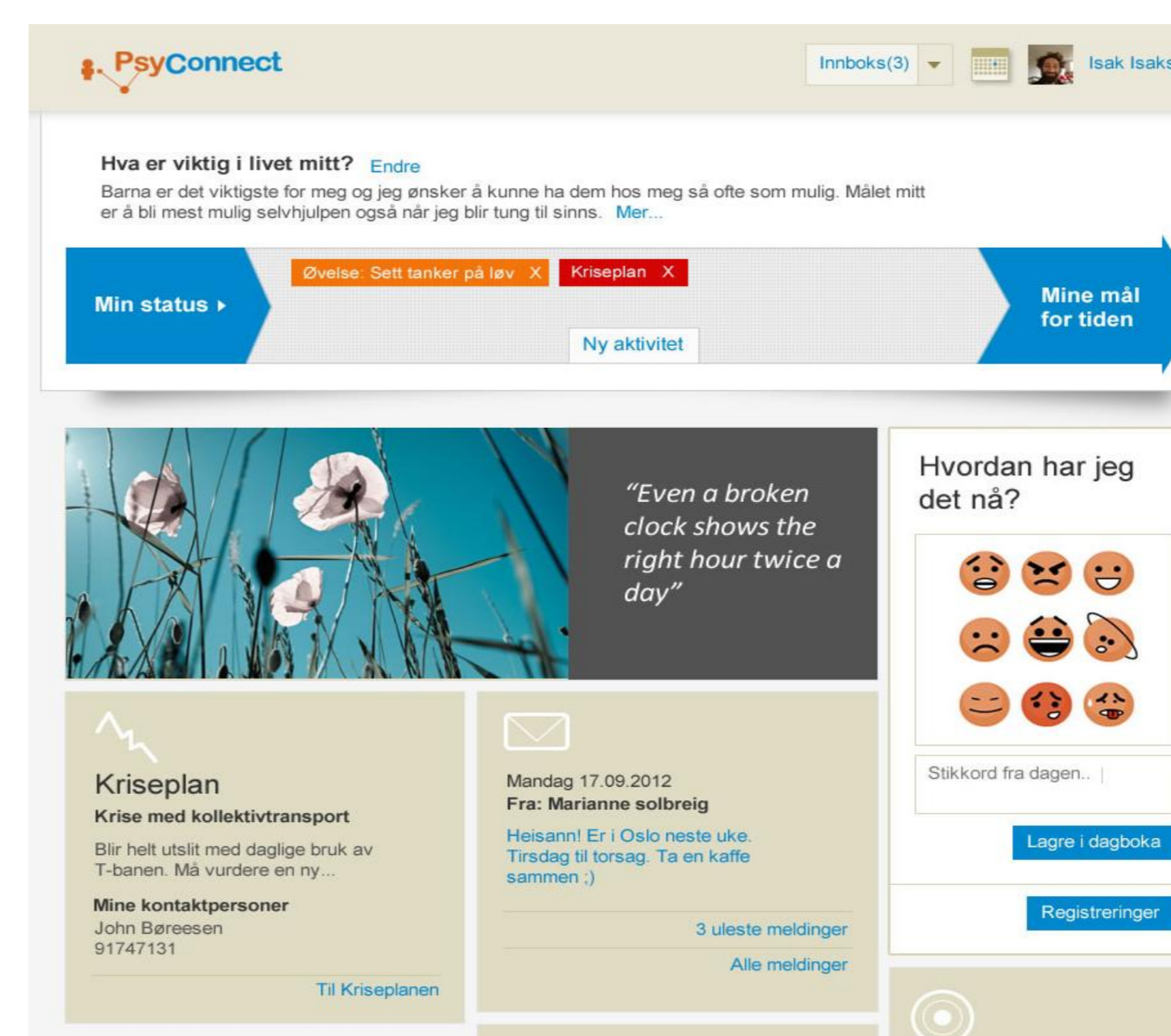


EXPERIENCES DURING INTERVIEWS

- Several of those interviewed knew me as a prior co-patient. Some knew that they were being interviewed by a service user, others not. Those who asked were told about my background and role.
- One experienced an anxiety attack during the interview. I instructed him through an exercise I have found useful, and we were afterwards able to complete the interview.
- I was told by a prior co-patient that I seemed more professional and competent in my new role.
- I was told that I seemed to understand their position and how to get them to talk.
- It is important to grasp and keep in mind the intention of the study. This gives the interviewer confidence to make necessary adaptations during the interview.
- It is more emotionally demanding to interview people at closed acute wards.
- Preliminary findings indicate an overwhelming interest in using a net-based tool for coping and collaboration with providers.



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DISCUSSION

The experiences as a co-researcher can be summed up as follows:

- It is important for co-researchers to be involved in the preparation of the interview guide with a clear intent and potential outcomes.
- My experience and knowledge as a service user has influenced the design of the interview. This includes issues of user involvement in care documentation and individual plans.
- Fruitful synergies arise when experiential knowledge and formal knowledge are engaged as a team.
- The role as a co-researcher is an exiting and fun learning experience.
- Mastering the role has inspired a desire for more formal education in collaborative research.

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Read more: www.communicaretools.org
www.psyconnect.no in use from 2013