

Paper for the STS Conference at Graz/Austria 2015

Conference themes and sessions:

- Bodies, Health and Technology
- Session 2: mHealth and Surveillance: Caring for Data?

mHealth as a neo-liberal technique

The use of mobile sensors and devices that track (patient) health data and transmit them to call centers, web sides, clinicians or caregivers is highly attractive for most actors in the health care system. First of all, the health care market, pharmaceutical industry as well as public health institutions profit from their usage. Furthermore, a wide range of health care products and services emerged by reason of health data. In this vein, the arrival of mHealth initiatives by health insurance companies also comes as no surprise, because they are linked to the imperative to reduce costs by optimizing clientele. Last but not least, millions of mHealth users have punchy reasons why they *love* to produce and to spread data.

Primarily, this willingness to produce and to spread data can be interpreted as a direct effect of the responsabilisation of the subjects in post-welfare states. The *duty to be well* (Greco) has become a daily performance of the *enterprising self* (Bröckling), who is optimizing his or her position on the diverse markets. This omnipresent competition is performed by relating individual data to the data of others. Secondly, the reduction of the public health care services enforces *home based care* for a broad range of people with handicaps or (critical) conditions. mHealth, thus, facilitates privately financed nursing in advanced liberal societies.

A discourse analyses, focusing on the visibilities through eHealth, and, linked to that, the hegemonialisation of knowledge and the processes of subjectivation, can offer a profound reconstruction.

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