

# Playing around with blood pressure monitors

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# The 'script' for home blood pressure monitoring?

Eg BHS/NIHR Home Blood Pressure Monitoring Protocol:

- Diagnosis, Treatment
- 'Promote medication adherence and lifestyle changes and make patients more aware of their condition'  
*ie for patients with suspected or diagnosed hypertension*

DATE	TIME	BLOOD PRESSURE SYSTOLIC	DIASTOLIC	PULSE RATE	CIRCUMSTANCES
01/09	8.30 p.m.	188	94	83	
01/09	8.35 p.m.	164	89	85	
02/09	11.00 a.m.	187	82	87	
12/09	11.00 p.m.	180	79	80	Just got up
13/09	9 a.m.	189	79	79	after eating break & shower
15/09	12.00 p.m.	100			
16/09	10.45			72	

  

DATE	TIME	BLOOD PRESSURE SYSTOLIC	DIASTOLIC
16/09	10.55 p.m.	175	84 69
17/09	2.00 p.m.	182	95 96
20/09	11.30 a.m.	190	90 82
20/09	7.00 p.m.	193	92 88
24/09	12 p.m.	192	87
31/09	11.30 a.m.	186	

*One concerned user who keeps a record.*

P7A: We just left it in the office ...once it's in there people want to have a little go at it, ...you know if there's a gadget around we want to have a play with it.

P8A: My dad said oh I'd like to have a go with that. I think it was just curiosity.

P9: It's almost like fun because I got it out last night to put it in my bag so I had a go and then my wife said oh I'll do mine, and then my daughter, I'll do mine and so it's just, that's how it is... Just in the living room last night ... A new parlour game.

P10: On one occasion some family members were around and for fun everybody took it.

P12: My partner used it, we had a go with him ... I think he wanted to, it's a new gadget, he wanted to have a go I think.

P23B: my ex-husband used to visit and he had a monitor and one day, just for the sheer fun of it almost, he said why don't you take your blood pressure? And I took my blood pressure and the reading was very high so of course I went off to the doctor

# Gamification 1

'Games and gamified systems offer to turn the wash of personal health information into an experience that is meaningful and motivating and to reframe daunting health problems into challenges that are enjoyable to solve'.

Munson et al (2015) Gamification and health

'My pleasure is not only rooted in my individual successes, but rooted in my shared identity as a healthy subject, part of a community that embraces similar values...by gamifying everyday tasks such as exercise and healthy living, users can make solitary and tedious activities more enjoyable'.

Whitson (2013) Gaming the quantified self

# Gamification 2

Enjoyment , fun, pleasure employed instrumentally to help people engage health

Sociality contributes to pleasure

Solo activities, may be shared virtually

Designers in charge of the fun

Serves corporate interests

# Enjoyment and sociality as user innovations

‘patients like these questions and often turn the answering ...into a quiz or competition with other members of the household. In this way they answer questions together, and turn the event into something else than a one-way questionnaire’.

Pols & Moser (2009) Cold technologies versus warm care?

‘sociability trumped physical activity and the goal of walking for health. Walking merely provided a context or excuse for enjoying sociable relations’.

Copelton (2010) outputs that count

# User studies

Health technologies used non-instrumentally  
for fun or pleasure

Sociality in real time and place as integral to  
pleasure

Fun as a user innovation

Relation to wider  
interests?

# Entertaining the grandchildren

John: **We all went out to a curry house and all the children and all the grandchildren we were all sitting about testing our blood pressure**

Ruth : we were sitting in this restaurant **and one of the kids got the blood pressure monitor out and we were all taking each other's. And they absolutely loved it, you know they were all excited.**

John: In fact the grandchildren do like having their blood pressure taken, it's fun.

Ruth: Yes we have, our eldest grandson is disabled, he's now aged 18 ...one time we gave him a blood pressure monitor for Christmas and it was wonderful to be able to find something like that because of his disability it's very difficult, normally you'd give like a ball to kick around.

Kate: So did the grown-ups join in or was it just the grandchildren?

John: Oh everyone, there were five grown-ups and four children.

Ruth: .... **it's a kind of game really.**

John: **...we just got a blood pressure monitor for the disabled grandson because it's fun, it's something he can do you know he might well end up in some sort of medical job when he's older if he can so he has an interest in health matters.**



# Grown-up play

Kate: Did you ever use it?

Tom: Yes a few times, **more often than not probably when I was drunk I came in and there'd be a few people here ended up testing each other's blood pressures so to speak....** So yeah, no I used to live with various people so I'm guessing we probably all had a go. I've always had lodgers and things.

Kate: Right, but you don't remember any specific occasions?

Tom: No, not really, as I say I'm sure at some point it I'd probably come back, look what my mm bought me and **we'd have all had a go to see who had the most normal/weirdest blood pressure.**

Tom by email: "my monitor is a bit like the sandwich toaster that everyone has at the back of the cupboard!"

# Sociality but maybe not fun after all?

Paul: on one occasion some family members were around and **for fun everybody took it**. We were talking about blood pressure, my wife's sister does have hypertension ...she said oh **can I have a go** or something like that and so we did, **all three of us took it that day** and I'm not even sure **if our nephew took it as well for some fun**.

Kate: And do you remember it as a fun occasion?

Paul: No because **mine was higher than theirs** and so I was upset **about it**.

Kate: Were they having fun?

Paul: It was taken fairly lightly but not completely casually because they both had been engaged with their blood pressure ... I don't recall either of them being particularly concerned, I do recall myself being **disappointed at mine being treated consistently at the time and it wasn't better than theirs as I saw it**.

# A group endeavour

**My friends came round at Christmas and then we were talking and then we'd get it out and I'd do everybody's. They'd say "Oh Laura do my blood pressure," ...and I had a piece of paper and I got [2 friends and husband] and mine and each year we'd add that on...**

**I'd say to each one of them "you need to sit for about 10 to 20 minutes, calm and quietly, try not to speak" so the rest of us would be chatting and I'd say "Don't engage in the conversation." I used to think it was better probably if I gave them some relaxing music, you know just so that they're at their most relaxed when I do it.**

**and they'd all compete to see who'd got the best blood pressure.**

**...But my husband is, it's usually spot on, something like 120/80, I mean his was text book, so it used to annoy the hell out of all the rest of us.**

# Health practices and gamification?

The practice of monitoring:

- Social and play aspects unanticipated by script
- Play as expression of resistance or subversion?
- Sociality as element of care?
- Affective relationships, not just 'cold technologies'

Reflections on gamification

- Play as user not designer innovation
- Real time sociality
- Relation to corporate or policy objectives.

