When a Robot Asks for Help: The Impact of a Healthcare Robot Admitting a Weakness on Patients' and Caregivers' Intention to Use the Robot

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Abstract

In the healthcare context, robots can support the caregivers in their daily tasks. This becomes necessary because of the increasing lack of skilled nurses combined with the rising demand for medical care. Existing nursing staff often do not have enough time to devote themselves fully to patients or need help with physically heavy work. However, several concerns on the use of robots have led to research on the acceptance of robots in healthcare. Our experiment tests a specific attribute of human-robot interaction – the behavior of the robot to ask a human interaction partner for help. For the effects of requesting for help, we consider an affective pathway (via social presence) and a cognitive pathway (via competence of the robot) on trustworthiness of the robot and, in turn, intention to use it. The results confirmed the cognitive pathway, but not the affective one. The results were consistent across two subsamples, in particular caregivers in hospitals and care-receivers (patients).

Keywords: *healthcare; human-robot-interaction; trustworthiness*

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