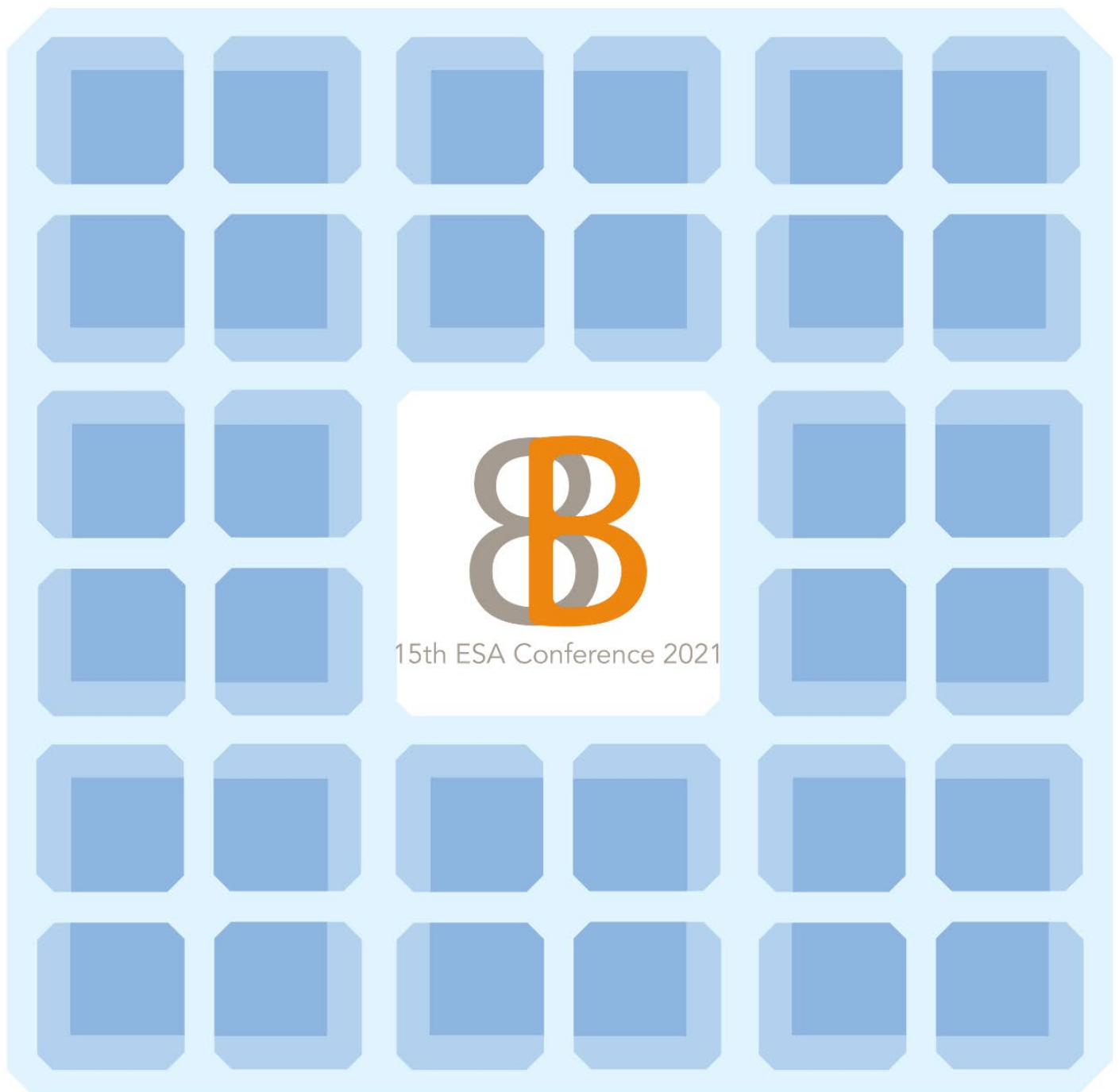


# Sociological Knowledges for Alternative Futures

Barcelona (online)

August 31st - September 3rd





15th ESA Conference | 31 August - 3 September 2021 | Barcelona, Spain  
(online)

54 Boulevard Raspail | Bureau A2-12 | 75006 | Paris | France

SIRET: 484 990 825 00024

[www.europeansociology.org](http://www.europeansociology.org)

ISBN 978-2-9581586-0-6 | EAN 9782958158606

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## Trust but Verify: Patient Experience in the Context of Healthcare Digitalization

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The strengthening of the digitalization trend in healthcare has become one of the significant consequences of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Digitalization turns into a routine of modern man and transform the patient experience dramatically. In this regard it is important to study the process of integrating technological innovations into the health practices of ordinary people.

The empirical basis of this research was the results of more than 80 in-depth interviews with residents of St. Petersburg (Russia) over 18 years old who use digital technologies to maintain health and receive medical care. As a result, three main options for including technologies in health care practices were identified: using different telemedicine services; search for medical information and support on the Internet resources; digital self-tracking. Nowadays the patient experience acquires a hybrid character and is realized in augmented reality mode. The combination of online and offline practices, patient choice in favor of one alternative or the other, on the one hand, are context-dependent (e.g., the presence of chronic diseases, the severity and novelty of the symptoms, etc.), on the other hand, are determined by the solution of issues of autonomy, trust, and responsibility. Professionals are losing their monopoly on providing medical services and are forced to compete with different Internet sources, bloggers, and network communities. Online interaction with a doctor requires the patient to be more competent in assessing and understanding his own condition, that evens out the traditionally non-symmetrical interaction. A patient is encouraged to be self-advocated and pro-active, but at the same time this situation triggers a continuous search and (re)verification of relevant information on numerous resources, that introduce significant uncertainty in the patient experience.

## Patients' Perception Of Arthroplasty Delays In Italy Due To COVID-19. Uncertainty As A New State Of Mind

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Italy has been one of the nations hit the hardest by the first Covid-19 wave. To face the emergency, from March until May 2020 all delayable elective surgeries were postponed in almost all hospitals and performed at a reduced pace until the end of 2020. As a result of these conditions more than 50.000 patients, mostly suffering from osteoarthritis in need of a prosthesis implantation (hip, knee, shoulder, or ankle), have not known when the surgical activity would finally resume and when they would be operated.

The first studies on this subject belong to surgery literature (Cisternas et al., 2020; Wilson et al., 2020). The intention of this explorative study is to tackle the problem of the emotional status of this vulnerable group. What were their key emotions about the situation of uncertainty, how did they manage it, and how did it influence the doctor-patient relationship? Our main objective is to obtain a snapshot of the situation and to lay the basis for further considerations on what can be done to mitigate the risk of the growing disorientation on the patients' side. From a methodology point of view, the research consisted in semi-structured interviews on a sample of patients of public and private hospitals in Italy, as well as with orthopaedic surgeons members of the scientific committee of the Italian Arthroplasty Registry (RIAP). Results have been compared to the international literature on the subject. Understanding patient's perception of both their own state of health and the uncertainty of the situation might help improve the decision-making in public health, hence benefiting the quality of the care services.