Use of digital tools by PHC professionals as instrument for health decision-making

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Background:
Investments have been made in precision public health strategies, as a way to better assess needs and evaluate the health services. Experiences point out that the computerization of health systems reduces costs and improves the quality of information. Primary Health Care (PHC) workers are key elements of this transformation, which can be enhanced with the use of digital health strategies. This paper aims to know the perception of the use of digital tools provided by the Ministry of Health by PHC workers in municipalities in the state of Ceará/Brazil.

Methods:
Focus groups and field monitoring were carried out with different professional profiles. The inclusion criterion was the use of digital tools in their daily work. Questionnaires were built to conduct semi-structured interviews. The analyzes were made using content analysis method.

Results:
Among the 21 participants (32-49 years old, mostly female), 3 reported not having digital knowledge prior to the use of digital tools in their daily work. Mostly associated the use of digital tools with greater agility and ease in the work routine and greater accuracy of information. The challenges were mainly related to the use of the equipment (tablet), such as fear of breakage, theft and problems in the synchronization of the information system. There was a consensus that the data collected are useful, however they are underutilized for the work process in PHC.

Conclusions:
The use of digital tools in the health work process is able to foster the critical view of professionals for analysis and decision making, pointing out strategies to face health issues in the territories. Pointed out as a facilitator in daily work, the use of digital tools does not exclude the use of paper sheets. Despite the greater supply of data, these are not used to their full potential, mainly due to insufficient time, given the numerous tasks for professionals.

Key messages:
• Carefully planned, developed and deployed digital interventions are powerful tools to improve health care system performance.
• The use of digital tools in the health work process is able to foster the critical view for analysis and decision making, pointing out strategies to face health issues in the territories.