

**“The Family at the Center”: Exploring Value Co-Creation in Healthcare Service
Ecosystems**

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Abstract:

Purpose: This study examines the value co-creation experience of families who discover one of its members' type-1 diabetes at young age. It evidences the complexity of service ecosystems in the context of long-term healthcare experiences, identifying the actors and dynamics that generate, challenge, support and shape the wellbeing of consumers.

Design/methodology/approach: In-depth interviews were conducted with family members, both adult children and their parents. The interview dataset was complemented by archival and online data from a wide array of sources (e.g., media, websites, blogs, official documents, historical documents) reporting on the experiences of families and patients with type 1 diabetes in Chile.

Findings: From the moment children are diagnosed, families engage in the assemblage of a service ecosystem to obtain information, acceptance, empathy, empowerment, and support in dealing with a chronic health condition and its consequences. This study's findings explain how value is co-created in healthcare ecosystems as families become increasingly invested in developing resources and negotiating resource flows. These findings offer a systemic understanding of value co-creation in contexts of chronic health conditions, and account for the central role of families in shaping healthcare service ecosystems.

Social implications: This study has implications for families living with chronic health conditions, and for other actors interested in maximizing the wellbeing of patients, such as public policy makers, companies in the health sector, and nongovernmental organizations.

Originality/value: This study empirically evidences the formation and evolution of service ecosystems and resource dynamics within them.