Supplementary File 4. Characteristics of studies included in the synthesis

Study	Health conditions and symptoms	Study aims/design	Study population	Type and format of approaches	Constructs of symptom appraisal addressed	Summary of approaches or its component pertaining to symptom appraisal	Underlying theories/mo dels	Evaluation of approaches
Cancer		· · ·						
Dine et al, 2011(1)	BCLE	To describe a low-cost BCLE self-monitoring technique using case study analysis: interview with a key informant who initiated the program	Women affected by BCLE	Education sessions	Symptom detection (demonstrati on) and response	 Education on comparison of a pre-cancer treatment (baseline) limb assessment to ongoing post-cancer treatment limb assessments Demonstration of circumferential measurement Utilization of tracing to assist in identifying anatomical landmarks for circumferential measurement Observing for skin changes in case of potentially life-threatening infection 	Nil	NA
Braile y et al, 1986(2)	Breast cancer	A quasiexperime ntal study to examine the effects of two health education intervention (group vs individual teaching) on health knowledge, beliefs, skill, and confidence in	Women employees from one business firm	Education sessions and materials (film, pamphlet)	Symptom detection (demonstrati on and hands-on practice)	 Group teaching: Introduction, film and discussion on breast cancer and BSE Demonstration and handson practice of BSE Education material on BSE Individual teaching: Introduction and discussion on breast cancer and BSE Demonstration and handson practice of BSE Education material on BSE Education material on BSE 	Predisposin g, Reinforcing, and Enabling Causes in Educational Diagnosis and Evaluation (PRECEDE) Model(3)	Frequency, skills and confidence in BSE; additional sources of information and perceived support; health knowledge; health beliefs; and prior experience with breast lumps or cancer in self or significant others assessed before and 4 months

Burge ss et al, 2008(4)	Breast cancer Breast	To evaluate	Women who were attending for or had recently received their final routine mammogra m and women in the general population aged > 65 years	Education sessions and materials (booklet with graphics and illustrations using cartoon characters, photographs of symptoms)	Symptom detection (demonstrati on) and response (role modelling)	 A booklet: Absolute and relative risk of developing breast cancer (graphics) Breast cancer symptoms and detection Role-modelling: illustration of help-seeking Action-planning upon symptom detection Positive feelings for prompt help-seeking Radiographer-delivered interview (key components): Photographs of early symptoms Detections of breast cancer symptoms Detections of breast changes using a silicone model Reinforcing help-seeking for breast changes Education programs/parties: 	Self- Regulation Theory (5), Theory of Planned Behavior(6), Implementat ion Intentions(7) and Social Cognitive Theory(8)	after the intervention NA Reviewing of
et al, 2009(9)	cancer	whether participation in a community- based breast cancer education party would increase women's	the general population	sessions and materials (pictures or illustrations)	detection (demonstrati on and hands-on practice) and response	 Gaming strategies: to increase knowledge related to breast cancer using pictures or illustrations Risk Prevention Early detection Demonstration of BSE 		education materials, education sessions, conduction of education parties, data entry, contacting participants and

		participation in screening activities				palpation of breast	appointment for breast cancer screening
Craun et al, 1987(10)	Breast cancer	To study the effectiveness of the Health belief model in predicting BSE behavior and the effectiveness of training formats in altering BSE knowledge, attitudes and frequency using a 2 (information) x 2 (demonstratio n) x 2 (prompts) factorial design	Female college students	Education sessions and materials (pamphlet)	Symptom detection (demonstrati on and hands-on practice)	 Training formats: Health Belief Information: A lecture about breast cancer and BSE Demonstration: Demonstration and hands-on practice of BSE on a breast model Prompt: A pamphlet explaining the 	Knowledge of breast cancer, knowledge of BSE procedures, attitudes relevant to BSE behavior, cues associated with BSE and frequency of BSE assessed prior to, 1 month post, 3 months post and 6 months post intervention
Khokh ar et al, 2009(12)	Breast cancer	To assess the effectiveness of short text messages (SMS) as a reminder system for regular practice of BSE	Women more than 20 years of age working for a private organizatio n	Education sessions and materials (video clip and pamphlet)	Symptom detection (demonstrati on and hands-on practice)	 Education program: Nil A talk on BSE Demonstration and hands- on practice of BSE on breast model A video clip on BSE SMS reminders sent to each woman towards the end of her menstrual period that is the appropriate time to do BSE 	Practice of BSE

						Pamphlet on BSE	
McLe ndon et al, 1982(13)	Breast cancer	To assess the effect of one-to-one BSE teaching on retention of knowledge and accuracy of performance among subjects randomly assigned to control or experimental group	Women with low socioecono mic status from a family planning clinic	Education sessions (one-to-one)	Symptom detection (hands-on practice) and response	One-to-one instruction on BSE: Nil BSE knowled and practice and practice • Hands-on practice personal beli about BSE a breast cance assessed pre 2 months position instruction	and efs nd er er and
Sheph erd et al, 2007(14)	Breast cancer	To determine the effectiveness of knowledge regarding BSE education and its impact towards early detection of breast cancer using a descriptive- observational design	Women who attended the Breast Week	Education sessions and materials (multimedia: radio)	Symptom detection (demonstrati on) and response	Breast Week:Orem's Self CareDirect observation of participants' in performing BSE (breast cancer and BSE prior to the Breast WeekDirect observation of participants' in performing BSE (breast inspection, b palpation and detection of abnormalities• A call for women to undergo a free breast examination and routine teaching on how to examine their breasts examined and at the same time were taught what to observe for and when to report any abnormalities detectedOrem's Self Care Nursing Model(15)Direct observation of participants' in performing BSE (breast inspection, b palpation and detection of abnormalities using a chec	skills reast d

						the event of any deviation from the normal		
Soren sen et al, 2005(16)	Breast cancer	To investigate the effect of a community- based BSE training program on women's knowledge, attitudes and behavior in relation to BSE	Women had and had not participated in the BSE training program	Education sessions (video)	Symptom detection (demonstrati on)	 BSE training program: A locally produced video Individual instruction on breast models and the women's own breasts 	Nil	Knowledge, attitude and behavior (frequency, technique and actions take upon detection of breast changes) of BSE
Stratt on et al, 1994(17)	Breast cancer	To determine 1) BSE proficiency by observation and 2) reduction of BSE proficiency as a function of weeks post training	Women who responded to radio and newspaper advertisem ents for free BSE training	Education sessions and materials (film and booklet)	Symptom detection (demonstrati on)	 One-on-one BSE (MammaCare) session: BSE using women's own breast and a tissue-matched silicone breast model Appropriate corrections in technique A 45-min film reviewing the MammaCare method of BSE Reminder stickers A booklet, The MammaCare Method: Your Personal Manual 	Nil	MammaCare evaluation of proficiency performance for self modelling, a tissue-matched silicon breast model and the Toronto Breast Self-Examination Instrument
Styrd et al, 1982(18)	Breast cancer	To stimulate employees to take an active interest in their own health care, to promote awareness as to the importance of performing	Female employees of a company	Education sessions and materials (film and publication)	Symptom detection (demonstrati on)	 Education session: An introduction to the need for practicing SSE A discussion of basic anatomy and physiology of breast tissue, signs and symptoms of breast disease, statistical data on occurrence of breast cancer, and diagnostic techniques 	Nil	BSE behavior assessed prior to, 3 months after and 1 year after the program

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		routine BSE, to teach proper BSE technique, and to increase frequency of BSE among those already practicing it				 used in the diagnosis of breast disease The American Cancer Society (ACS) film, How to Examine Your Breasts, which discusses techniques used in SSE Additional discussion of breast abnormalities, risk factors, and newer treatment methods Education material: The ACS publication: How to Examine Your Breasts 		
Luther et al, 1985(19)	Breast cancer and testicular cancer	To promote the concept of early detection of cancer to high school students by teaching the topics of breast and testicular self- examination	High school teachers, school nurses, and other interested community educators	Education sessions and materials (movies)	Symptom detection (demonstrati on)	 Education packet: The breast and testicular self-examination curriculum Overhead transparencies to aid in teaching breast and testicle anatomy Samples of written materials Movies on breast and testicular self-examination Breasts and testicle models Education workshop: Background information about breast and testicular cancer How to teach breast and testicular self-examination How to use materials available to teach breast and testicular self-examination Recovered breast and testicular cancer patients discussing their experiences 	Nil	Teacher satisfaction; student self- exams, knowledge about BSE and TSE, and attitudes toward early cancer detection
Corne Il et al.	Melanoma	To compare the ability of	Lay persons	Education materials	Symptom interpretatio	Online melanoma identification task using different training:	Nil	Sensitivity, specificity and

2015(20)		volunteers to distinguish between images of melanomas and mimics of melanoma using various training strategies	who visited the website created for the study in a 3-week period	(photograph s)	n (comparison)	 Rule-based training using the written ABC criteria: 'D' for diameter of the ABC(D) criteria was excluded because the images used in the study were not presented as life size on the computer monitor Image training: photographs of 80 melanoma, 300 seborrhoeic keratoses and 300 benign naevi Expert melanoma training set Expert benign training set Layperson-selected melanoma set 		accuracy in identification of melanoma
Rober tson et al, 2014(21)	Melanoma	To compare image training using a 6 (experimental set of images) x 2 (benign class) x 3 (training method) design	Laypeople recruited from friends and family of staff, relatives of patients, and undergradu ate students	Education materials (video and images of skin lesions)	Symptom interpretatio n (comparison)	Education materials: • A 3-min video: brief overview of skin cancer • Images of skin lesions with different experimental sets, benign class and training method (Control, ABC criteria, or Image) • 42 'training' lesions (21 melanomas and 21 benign) • 48 'test' lesions (12 melanomas and 36 benign)	Nil	Diagnostic accuracy, sensitivity and specificity in distinguishing between melanomas and mimics of melanoma
Scott et al, 2012(22)	Oral cancer	To assess the immediate and short term effect of a theory-based intervention to	Patients aged between 45 and 65 years of age who	Education sessions and materials (leaflet)	Symptom detection (hands-on practice) and response	 One-to-one plus leaflet instruction: Assessing knowledge and understanding of detecting oral cancer early, and 	Self- Regulation Theory(23, 24), Social Cognitive Theory(8)	Knowledge of oral cancer, anticipated delay for signs of oral cancer, perceived confidence to

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		encourage early detection and presentation of oral cancer in the "at risk" population randomly assigned to control, leaflet or one-to-one instruction group	smoked and had no prior history of oral cancer			 providing correct information where appropriate Addressing barriers to seeking help Outlining the procedure of mouth self-examination, and providing an opportunity for the participant to perform mouth self-examination with receipt of feedback 		seek help, understanding of MSE, perceived confidence to perform MSE, likelihood of monthly MSE and emotion response to MSE assessed at baseline, post- intervention, and 1 month follow-up
Brook s et al, 2001(25)	Skin cancer	To investigate the use of simplified instructions to facilitate holistic assessment of skin lesions	Undergrad uate psychology students	Education materials (pictures of skin lesions)	Symptom interpretatio n (comparison)	 Experiment 1: a series of pictures of skin lesions Harmless lesions: 1 freckle, 4 seborrhoeic keratoses and 5 compound naevi Warning lesions: 10 dysplastic or atypical naevi Cancerous lesions: 1 squamous cell carcinoma, 2 basal cell carcinomas, 2 nodular melanomas and 5 superficial spreading melanomas Experiment 2: 36 pair comparisons of the 9 representative lesions Freckle Compound melanocytic neavus Seborrheic kerotosis Dysplastic neavus Basal cell carcinoma Squamous cell carcinoma Low risk superficial spreading melanoma 	Nil	Discrimination between benign and malignant skin lesions assessed before and after exposure to education materials

Bespira	atory diseases					 Moderate risk superficial spreading melanoma High risk superficial spreading melanoma 		
Butz et al, 2005(26)	Asthma: persistent cough, wheeze and intercostal retractions	A cross- sectional analysis of asthma home management skills in parents and children enrolled in an ongoing randomized clinical trial of an asthma educational intervention	Families with children aged 2-8 years who have asthma	Education sessions	Symptom identification , interpretatio n (comparison) and response	Symptom identification/nebulizer educational intervention: • Symptom identification • Review of early and late symptoms • Comparison of normal breathing to breathing patterns during an acute asthma episode • Nebulizer use	Model of Symptom Managemen t(27)	Parents' ability to recognize symptoms and nebulizer-use technique using structured questionnaire and demonstration of nebulizer use
Collan d et al, 2004(28)	Asthma	To investigate whether it is feasible to teach patients to recognise prodromal signs, whether patients will comply with instructions to act upon first symptoms using a single blind prospective randomised study	Children with moderate asthma according to the American Thoracic Society criteria	Education sessions	Symptom identification , interpretatio n (comparison) and response	 Education sessions: Information on asthma, symptoms, preventive measures, medication and asthma exacerbations Individual prodromal signs, which were identified together with the parents Instructions on dose of inhaled corticosteroids when signs occurred 	Nil	Primary outcomes: rate and severity of asthma attacks, frequency of disabilities, absence from school and parental absence from work due to asthma, registration of prodromal signs and compliance to self-treatment instructions; secondary outcomes: lung

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								function and bronchial responsiveness
Gardn er et al, 2016(29)	Asthma	A quality improvement project to address the need for information for parents and children with asthma	Children under the age of 18 who had been diagnosed with asthma, asthma exacerbatio n or status asthmaticu s	Education sessions and materials (binder with large pictures)	Symptom recognition, interpretatio n (comparison) and response	 An individualized asthma resource binder: Basic asthma disease understanding Medications and medication side effects Symptoms and symptom control Exacerbation recognition Use of an asthma action plan An individualized teaching session: Basic asthma pathophysiology Medications Methods to improve medication compliance Demonstration of proper inhaler use Symptom recognition and management: lifestyle change Recognition of exacerbation: reflection on current hospitalization to identify early warning signs Use of an asthma action plan: response when an exacerbation is recognized 	Health Belief Model(11)	(planned: hospital 30-day readmission rate (primary outcome), and satisfaction of physician and nurse, advanced practice providers, and residents)
Hendr icson et al,	Asthma	Development of the patient education	Children aged 6 to 16 who had physician-	Education sessions and materials	Symptom recognition and	Educational intervention on specific self-management skills using flip cards:	Social Learning Theory(31), Social	Parent and child subjective evaluation of educational

1996(30)	COPD	an individualized and bilingual program designed to reduce morbidity and improve quality of life among Hispanic children with chronic asthma	Patients	(flip cards with illustrations, videotape, pamphlet)	(role modelling)	 sy ou Common the size Pression of the s	ecognizing asthma imptoms before they get at of control priectly administering edicines as pre- scribed by e physician and managing de effects romptly recognizing and sponding to acute asthma imptoms that require nergency care emaining calm and voiding stress-inducing actions when symptoms ccur inimizing exposure to ggers (precipitating agents ich as smoke, mold, himal hair) stablishing appropriate vels of physical and social ctivities for the child ommunicating effectively th health care personnel iques incorporated into the ention: ble modelling: self- anagement behaviors ideotape) uilding self-efficacy: hands- n practice with inhalers and eak flow meters and role- aying for communication hen symptoms occur ontracting: written greement	Cognitive Theory(32)	modules, attrition rate and parent impression 1 year after program completion
t et al,	exacerbatio	A qualitative study of self-	with COPD	sessions	symptom recognition,		nderstanding COPD	e Model for	NA

2013(33)	n: increased breathless, cough, sputum, fever and fatigue; orthopnea; decreased activity tolerance; poor sleep; change in mental status	regulation in older adults with COPD and development of a theory and evidence- based teaching plan to build practical self- regulation skills in patients with COPD			interpretatio n (comparison) and response	•	Everyday management strategies Symptom monitoring/self- observation	Self- Managemen t of Chronic Disease(34)	
-	ascular disea					-			
Davis et al, 2019(35)	ACS	To evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of a nurse- delivered education and skill-building intervention designed to improve symptom recognition and interpretation	Women aged 35 years and older who had been hospitalize d with a definitive diagnosis of ACS	Education sessions and materials (pamphlet and pocket card)	Symptom recognition, interpretatio n (comparison) and response		vo face-to-face teaching ssions: Symptom recognition and interpretation	Nil	Feasibility, acceptability and satisfaction with the intervention; knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about ACS symptoms

		in women with recurrent ACS symptoms using a single group pre- post-test design				 that could mimic ACS symptoms, and misconceptions about ACS symptoms and care- seeking responses A symptom monitoring notebook with instructions to document recurrent symptoms Individualized action plan Timely and appropriate care- seeking behavior for recurrent symptoms Reinforcement of information from the first session
Raczy nski et al, 1999(36)	AMI: chest pain (primary symptom) and shortness of breath	Development of the theoretically- based Rapid Early Action for Coronary Treatment (REACT) intervention that addresses community organization, community education, professional education, and patient education	Community education: high-risk individuals, family members, and community residents; patient education: high-risk patients and their families	Education sessions and materials (flyers/broch ures, posters, magnets and other "tokens"; video)	Symptom recognition and response (role modelling)	Community organization:SocialNA• Engaging organizations and individuals in a collaborative effort to mobilize their resources and institutional structures to reduce AMI delaySocialNACommunity education:Self- Regulatory Theory(38), Community education:Regulatory Theory(38), CommunityOrganization delayOrganization Theory(39), Diffusion of Innovation Theory(40), Social Marketing Theory(41)• Building skills to improve behavioral intentions and actions; andMA

						 Increasing self-efficacy to respond rapidly to AMI symptoms Provider education: Improving understanding of factors related to patient delay Enhancing motivation to learn skills and intervene with patients Enhancing patient-centred counselling Impacting clinical practice Patient education: interpersonal Changing patients' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, skills, behaviors, and self- efficacy regarding prompt action for AMI symptoms Employment of patient- centered counselling, role- modelling, and behavioral rehearsal 		
Jurge ns et al, 2013(42)	HF: dyspenea and fatigue	To test the efficacy of a HF symptom training program on patients' self- care ability and particularly their ability to recognize and respond to changes in HF symptoms	Patients with a confirmed diagnosis of chronic HF	Education sessions and materials (booklet)	Symptom detection, interpretatio n (comparison) and response	 HF symptom training intervention: Weight scale HF self-care booklet Symptom profile: 3 symptoms with highest distress selected for clustering on symptom graph Symptom burden at rest Comparison of symptom burden after 6-min walk test with symptom burden at rest and discussion on symptom meaning and response 	Theory of HF Self- Care(43), Theory of Unpleasant Symptoms(4 4, 45), Uncertainty in Illness Theory(46- 49), Self- Regulation Theory(24)	Time to first event of HF hospitalization, emergency department admission for HF or HF-related cause and death (primary outcomes); HF symptom awareness and self-care assessed at

0.11		using a randomized control trial				Home visit to review symptom training		baseline and 3 months follow-up
Other I Hunt et al, 2015(50)	Concussion	ns To determine if a concussion- education video developed for high school athletes would increase the reporting of concussive injuries and symptom recognition using a cross- sectional, between groups design	High school athletes aged 13 to 18 years	Education materials (video)	Symptom detection, interpretatio n (comparison) and response	 Concussion education video addressing questions pertaining to head injuries or concussions: What is a concussion? How do concussions happen? How do I know I have a concussion? What are the signs and symptoms of concussion? What is the importance of reporting my injury? Whom should I report my injury to? What is the difference between just getting hit in the head and having a concussion? How are concussions managed? When will I be able to play again? 	Nil	Knowledge of concussion symptoms, assessed before and immediately after watching the education video
Bonov ich et al, 1990(51)	Labor: contractions, vaginal discharge and amniotic fluid	To test the effectiveness of an intervention developed to meet the specific needs of clinic patients in recognizing the signs of true labor	Patients in their first uninterrupt ed pregnancie s who had reached 30 weeks' gestation	Education sessions and materials	Symptom detection, interpretatio n (comparison) and response	 Education material: A printed list of instructions on how to detect signs of labor Education session: Reinforcement of correct knowledge recall about labor patients gained prior to the intervention and provision of only necessary information to fill in knowledge gaps 	Flanders' Analyzing Teaching Behavior(52)), Redman's Principles of Patient Education(5 3)	Number of visits subjects made to labor and delivery by examining the registration records in the labor suite

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		using an experimental design with one treatment group and one control group				Instruction on distinguishing between Braxton Hicks contractions and contractions of active labor, changes in vaginal discharge (sights), distinguishing between involuntary urination and leaking of amniotic fluid (smell), and contraction pain and other senses (sensations)		
Erikse n et al, 2010(54)	Malaria	To develop a community intervention to improve first line case management of malaria in under-five children through primary caretakers in collaboration with local women groups and existing health centres and to evaluate its feasibility and effectiveness on anaemia, fever and malaria prevalence using a cluster-	Women leaders selected from village groups	Education sessions	Symptom detection, interpretatio n and response (role modelling)	 Training of health workers Theoretical training: lectures on principles of malaria case management including clinical diagnosis, treatment and follow-up Practical training: management of suspected malaria cases in the outpatient department of the district hospital Training of women leaders Theoretical training: same as training of health workers, with a focus on identifying fever cases that should be treated as suspected uncomplicated malaria or referred to health facilities as suspected severe malaria or other diseases requiring formal health care treatment Practical training: observation of management of suspected malaria cases 	Nil	Proportion of moderate/severe anaemia in children aged 6- 59 months (primary outcome), proportions of measured fever, malaria prevalence and reported fever during the last 48 hours, mean malaria parasite densities, mean haemoglobin values and mean weight, assessed pre- and post- intervention

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Matin	Neonatal	randomised controlled effectiveness trial To enable	Women	Education	Symptom	A smartphone preloaded with an	Nil	Knowledge of
et al, 2020(55)	illness: lethargy, chest indrawing, convulsions and difficulty breastfeedin g	reliable and consistent assessment of neonates for identification of signs of illness to facilitate early referral of sick neonates, especially during the critical first week of life	who gave birth at the study hospital	apps/device s (audio, images of danger signs)	detection, interpretatio n (comparison) and response	 interactive app (the NeMo app) Pictures, symbols, and audio recordings in the local language 4 qualitative danger signs, 2 images displayed for each sign: one showing a newborn exhibiting the danger sign and one showing a healthy infant Lethargy Chest indrawing Convulsions Difficulty breastfeeding A wearable sensing band (the NeMo band) that measures breathing rate 		danger signs assessed at baseline and after training, observation of device use, usage and impression of device assessed using quantitative scales and qualitative interviews, responses to danger sign triggers assessed through qualitative discussion
Ziadé et al, 2021(56)	RA: joint pain and swelling	To evaluate the perceptions of patients with RA about self- assessment of their disease activity using DAS-28 after watching the educational video	Adult patients with RA	Education materials (video)	Symptom detection (demonstrati on)	 Education video: A short introductory note about the assessment of disease activity in RA A demonstration of the evaluation of each of the 28 joints for pain and swelling, performed by a real patient with RA An explanation about the final score calculation and the categorization into the disease activity levels 	Nil	Perceptions about self- assessment of disease activity using semi- structured interview

BCLE: lymphedema secondary to breast cancer treatment, BSE: breast self-examination, COPD: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, ACS: acute coronary syndrome, AMI: acute myocardial infarction, CHD: coronary heart disease, EMS: emergency medical system, ED: emergency department, MI: myocardial infarction, HF: heart failure, RA: rheumatoid arthritis, DAS: disease activity score

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