Attitudes of Mental Health Patients Toward the Use of Mobile Health Technologies

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The aim of this preliminary study was to assess patients’ attitudes toward mobile health technology usage in communicating with care providers in a behavioral health setting.

Study participants include underserved individuals who were developmentally disabled, or suffering with an addictive disease. Face-to-face interviews consisted of thirteen questions were conducted at an in-patient behavioral health service center located in Brunswick, GA for a period of five weeks. The participants’ responses were electronically captured by interviewers using Survey Monkey. Ten (n=10) of the participants who completed the entire interview sessions were included in this study.

Among the participants, 90% had working cell phones, 89% of these cellphone owners used text messaging regularly and 67% of them were interested in receiving treatment related text reminders. Sixty three percent of the participants were interested in receiving health related information or reminders via email. Eighty nine percent of the cell phone owners had access to Internet via cell phone or personal computers and only 44% of them were interested in making prescription refill request or asking question to care providers using a secure website. Sixty seven percent of the respondents were interested in receiving a free smart phone to communicate with care providers.

The results indicate patients’ positive attitudes toward using mobile technologies in communicating with their care providers which have the potential to improve effective patient engagement and communication in behavioral health settings.

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