Feasibility and Acceptability of an iPad-Based Interactive Mobile Application to Improve the Sexual Health of Low-Income Minority Adolescents

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Introduction

- The iPad presents exciting opportunities to extend mobile health technology to vulnerable populations.
- Mobile tablet computers have been piloted in a variety of adult clinical-research settings. Studies show they are feasible and acceptable for collecting patient information and improving patient-provider communication, especially regarding sensitive health topics.
- However, little is known about adolescent patient and provider perspectives on iPad health application (app) use in real-world clinical settings.

Objective

- To determine the feasibility and acceptability of using iPad apps in school-based health centers to promote responsible sexual health behaviors of low-income minority adolescents.

Methods

- Two sexual health iPad apps were introduced at the Jordan and Carson School-Based Wellness Centers.

Methods Continued

- Patients completed an anonymous electronic survey regarding their satisfaction with the overall clinical experience. Results were analyzed in Excel to determine whether patient satisfaction was significantly different following introduction of the apps.
- Two months after introduction of the apps, clinic staff completed a semi-structured interview. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and qualitatively analyzed to identify themes.

Results

- We found no significant differences in the patients’ perceived waiting times or overall provider satisfaction before and after the iPad was introduced.
- Patients reported high satisfaction with the apps themselves.

Results Continued

- At both sites:
  - Staff felt provider counseling was more effective; patients were more confident about their sexual health choices after using the app.
  - Staff worried about theft, damage, or misuse of the device.

Conclusions

- Use of sexual health apps is acceptable and feasible for adolescent clinic providers and patients.
- Clinic staff recognize that sexual health apps improve patient-provider communication and adolescent decision-making.
- Barriers to integrating mobile health technology vary by site and role, likely due to staff comfort with tablet computer technology.
- Clinics serving vulnerable populations may need additional support to successfully adopt new health technology.

Figure 1: Screen shots of the app

- The apps were offered to adolescents immediately prior to the clinical encounter; risk assessment data from the app was e-mailed to the provider for discussion during the visit.