Health Services Research Unit
Nuffield Department of Population Health

New Richards Building, Old Road Campus, Headington, Oxford OX3 7LF
Tel: +44 (0)1865 289425, email: laura.kelly@dph.ox.ac.uk

Assessing self-management in people with type 2 diabetes using technology-based interventions: qualitative research to inform the development of a new questionnaire

AN UPDATE FOR PARTICIPANTS

The above study has been undertaken and funded by the Health Services Research Unit, University of Oxford. The team at Oxford began in February 2016 by reviewing research into the area of self-management in type 2 diabetes, alongside research relating to the use of technology to aid self-management among people with long-term conditions. This literature informed the topic areas for inclusion in participant interviews and informed how the project would proceed. The purpose of the participant interviews was to explore how technology-based services, such as mobile applications and web-based portals, are used by people with type 2 diabetes to support the management of their health. Findings from the interviews will inform a new questionnaire designed to assess self-management among those using technology to support them manage their health.

In-depth interviews have been completed with ten women and five men who have type 2 diabetes and have some experience of using technology in connection with their health. Participants, on average, were 55 years old and ranged from 29 -70 years old. The sample also included participants with varied levels of experiences when managing type 2 diabetes, with time since their diagnosis ranging from three months to 23 years and ten months at the time of the interview. On average, participants were diagnosed seven years and four months ago. Participants included in the sample also reported experiencing a range of other long-term health conditions including: osteoarthritis, psoriasis, sciatica, asthma, cancers in last five years, high cholesterol, addictions (alcohol, painkillers), asthma, COPD, non-malignant tumour in back, pancreas condition, ovarian cyst, Asperger's, high blood pressure, stroke and kidney disease.

Themes and observations drawn from the interview data included how health services can support self-management, the use of technology to aid self-care and monitor health, the use of technology to support psychological well-being and, incentives and disincentives when using technology in relation to managing type 2 diabetes. Analysis is still ongoing and this data will be written up, published in scientific journals and presented at international conferences.

To create the intended questionnaire, the next stage of this study will use data from the interviews to form the basis of a large number of questions that relate closely to those using technology to manage their health. The number of candidate questions will then be reduced by the team at Oxford and circulated among a group of experts to gain thoughts on their content. We will then return to a number of people who have type 2 diabetes in order to check that all the questions are both relevant and easy to understand. The draft questions will subsequently be tested among a large group of people through an online survey, so that we can establish the underlying characteristics of the questionnaire. Statistical analysis should highlight broad themes covered by responses to the questions asked. Our analysis will also identify questions that are not particularly helpful and ultimately result in a shorter questionnaire.

The research team would like to say a huge thank you to the participants who helped us so far in this research. Without your input our work would not be possible. We would also like to thank the support groups, Diabetes UK and the Diabetes Support Forum UK, who so readily assisted us in finding people to take part.

January 2017