

Health Care and Neuroscience

April 08-09, 2019 | Zurich, Switzerland

A Call to Psychologists: Addressing mental health needs using the digital technology of mental health applications

AM Pidgeon

Bond University, Australia

For over a decade, the psychological treatment of mental health issues has been undergoing a fundamental change. This change has been largely driven by the continued significant unmet need for mental health services and the availability of digital technology such as the internet and mobile devices. Individuals around the world are becoming increasingly dependent on the internet to obtain information and interact with services, due to flexibility, convenience, choice, cost and time savings. This dependence is becoming more evident as individuals seeking mental health information and support report preferring to access services online rather than face-to-face services. The field of mobile mental health (“m-Health”) is evolving rapidly with an unprecedented growth of psychological tools on the market including preventive and therapeutic interventions. M-Health applications offer the opportunity for mental healthcare delivery anytime and anywhere overcoming geographical, time based organizational barriers with low and affordable costs. M-Health applications can be used as a bridge between face-to-face therapy sessions, improve adherence to out of therapy activities while promoting patient autonomy. Given

the ever increasing demands and limited supply of mental health services, coupled with barriers to care including a patient’s desire for anonymity, indirect financial costs and impaired access to mental health services, the use of apps could promote mental health service efficiency as well as supporting the mental health system to achieve the promise of providing equal access for equal need. The challenge that psychology faces with the rapid increase of m-health applications is the availability of low-quality applications with a lack of an underlying evidence base, a lack of scientific credibility and limited clinical effectiveness. M-health application designers are rarely psychologists and if they were, there would be better accuracy of the content with evidence to support the efficacy of the application. The barriers for psychologists designing m-health applications are typically a lack of technical skills and time. This presentation will discuss the growing need for psychologists to shift their philosophy-from seeing what happens-to a prioritisation of designing and evaluating m-health applications in the provision of high quality clinical services to patients.

e: apidgeon@bond.edu.au

 Notes: