

A health equity perspective on mHealth applications for the self-management of diabetes

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Statement of the problem: Diabetes is among one of the leading cause of morbidity and premature mortality in Canada. Given the clinical and economic burden of caring for pre-diabetic and diabetic patients, healthcare providers and organizations are seeking new ways of caring for this large population of patients. They are turning to digital health specifically mobile health applications to help them proactively manage these patients. In addition, they are seeking to empower these patients to proactively self-manage their condition. However, concerns have risen about the feasibility of these new modes of patient engagement to actually reach the patient populations that can benefit the most from them. The purpose of this study is to highlight these concerns and propose ways to address them.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A scoping review utilizing the Arksey & O'Malley framework was conducted with peer reviewed journal articles published between 2010 and 2016. A health equity lens was utilized to focus on the interaction between the clinicians, healthcare organizations, patients and mobile diabetes applications to understand these relationships and the context in which it takes place. Findings: Mobile diabetes applications have the potential to be valuable to patients with pre-diabetes and diabetes,


however because of a lack of considerations by clinicians and healthcare organizations, the patients that can benefit the most from mobile diabetes applications are not able to do so due to several factors.

Conclusion & Significance: Clinicians and healthcare organizations must recognize and acknowledge the diverse needs of marginalized and vulnerable pre-diabetic and diabetic patients in order to effectively engage them in self-management of their conditions through the use of mobile diabetes applications. Recommendations are made to help clinicians and healthcare organizations recognize the barriers to the effective utilization of mobile diabetes applications by marginalized and vulnerable patient groups.

Speaker Biography

Reshma Prashad has expertise in the implementation and evaluation of digital health technologies in Canada. Her utilization of a health equity lens in this area of research is unique and adds a critical perspective on engaging marginalized and vulnerable patient

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