

Rural Patients' Need for a "One-stop shop experience" in Cardiovascular Disease Management: A BCATPR study identifies a niche for an internet-based platform for CVD management

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The British Columbia Alliance on Telehealth Policy and Research (BCATPR) conducted "A qualitative investigation of Internet-based technology for the remote management of cardiovascular disease (QCVD Study)".

BACKGROUND

With significant declines in cardiovascular disease (CVD) mortality, attention has shifted to patient management. The use of telehealth offers the potential to overcome geographical barriers and improve access to care for patients. This study published in Jarvis-Selinger, S., Bates, J., Araki, Y., & Lear, S.A. (2011) Internet-Based Support for Cardiovascular Disease Management, International Journal of Telemedicine and Applications Volume 2011 (2011) explored how an Internet-based platform might facilitate collaboration among healthcare providers co-managing rural patients with CVD and enhance their behavioral change. Forty-eight participants were interviewed including: a) patients (n=12), b) physicians (n=11), c) nurses (n=13), and d) allied health professionals (n=10).

KEY FINDINGS

Both health care providers and patients supported the use of Internet-based technology for CVD management, identifying the greatest benefits for sharing of patient data, as well as supporting patient self-management and co-management. It was felt that co-management may be beneficial and help the care team support a common care plan and reduce the risk for conflicting advice to the patient. Participants also highlighted the need to ensure security and privacy of data, in addition to ensuring data accuracy. Participants were quoted as saying:

- *"I think it's good to be able to track exactly where patients were and what their goals are, and where they were compared to their goals and how they're doing on a daily or month-to-month basis in trying to get to those goals. To do that visually and to be able to track things would make a big difference."*
(Physician)

- *"Setting up a diet or an exercise program where you've got to tick off something every day and say, "well I've done that," and see what I need to do the next day... sort of setting up a routine would be good."*
(Patient)

RECOMMENDATION

The support for implementing an Internet-based platform for CVD management needs to be tempered by a clear understanding of how traditional concerns (e.g. data accuracy, privacy and security) will be mitigated by such a platform.

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For more information about the QCVD study or to find out about other BCATPR projects, please call Yuriko Araki, BCATPR Director of Research and Development at (778) 782.7737 or email yurikoa@sfu.ca.

