Session Topic: Global Health/Bioninformatics

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Potential reach of mobile health for educating, empowering and engaging chronically diseased patients: evidence from a survey in Egypt

Background: Patient education includes multiple interventions teaching patients about their health to improve their outcomes. The term has evolved to the more active terms (patient engagement and empowerment). Patients, who are diagnosed with chronic diseases that cost patients a lifelong treatment and dangerous complications (e.g. Diabetes Mellitus) need to be responsible for their health by self-management. With more computers and mobile devices owners globally, telehealth offers promising healthcare technology interventions to improve patient's health literacy.

Methods: This study involves a structured questionnaire administered online to examine the level of acceptance to use mobile technology (a form of telehealth approaches) to deliver health-related education. We collected data through a survey targeting a sample of 56 Egyptian patients aged between 25 and 65 years old in 2014.

Results: The results showed a promising acceptance rate (54%) among respondents; mostly those aged between 25-35 years agreed to use mobile technology like Short Message Service (SMS) to deliver health-related educational information to improve their self-managing experience and health outcomes.

Conclusion: We conclude that accompanying the rise in mobile phones subscription and willingness to receive health-related SMS, mobile health presents an opportunity for health education programs, especially when targeting younger adults.

Implications: These findings emphasize the potential to introduce more individualized, innovative and engaging approaches to educate and leverage patients with their own health using technology in a developing country. We recommend further studies to evaluate the effect of mobile-based patient education on a sample of chronically diseased patients (e.g. diabetics patients) to measure the desired outcomes such as lifestyle and self-care behaviours (medication adherence, improved knowledge, satisfaction and quality of life).