The Effectiveness of Telehealth and Telecare Technologies
Key drivers and barriers to implementation

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The Whole System Demonstrator (WSD) Programme

- A research project funded by the Department of Health to find out how technology can help people manage their own health while maintaining their independence.
- The largest randomised control trial of telecare and telehealth in the world to date.
- WSD Action Network – working with 12 innovator sites and creating a knowledge hub on the evidence-base
WSD Pilots
Participating Sites

CORNWALL

• The poorest County in England, with a dispersed rural population
• Population of >500,000
• 46% of the population live in settlements of <3,000 people
• 99.1% White British
• 10.3% of the population are aged 65+; 7.2% 75+ and 2.6% 85+
• 21% of the population report a limiting long term illness

NEWHAM

• One of the most deprived areas in the UK
• Population of 270,442 - GP registered population of 300,000
• Population increasing at a higher rate than the London average
• 2nd most diverse population in the UK - >68% BME; >140 first languages
• 8.5% of the population are aged 65+
• 17.3% of the population have a limiting long term illness
• Highest death rate from stroke and COPD
• Highest diabetes rate in the UK
• 2nd highest CHD rate in London

KENT

• Combination of rural and urban populations
• Population of 1.37m (excluding Medway UA). Two areas already piloting telehealth
  Ashford / Shepway population of 211,100 & Dartford / Gravesham / Swanley population of 210,000
• 3.5% BME
• 17.3% of the population are aged 65+; 8.4% 75+ and 2.2% 85+
• Within the target population, individuals report having an average of 1.6 of the three target conditions of HF, COPD, Diabetes
Rationale for WSD

- promote individuals long term well-being and independence
- improves individuals and their carer’s quality of life
- improves the working lives of staff
- is more cost effective
- is more clinically effective
- provides an evidence base for future care and technology models.
Experience to date

- Extremely challenging
- Technology one element of success
- Communications, listening and consistency key
- Having a dedicated team with good people skills determines your success
- Good project/programme management is essential
- Stakeholders need continued support
- What you do on a small scale does not translate to a large scale
Evaluation Progress

- Programme going well – evaluation complex and data management key
- All sites have keen advocates, and service users who don’t want to be without these services.
- 6191 people recruited, 3000+ in interview programme
- Pressure now on Universities. Emerging worldwide evidence promising.
- 12 month follow-up progressing
England: current state of play

- Between 1.6 million and 1.7 million people in England benefit from telecare services, and the number is growing.
- England takes the lead among European countries in trialing new products and services.
- Telehealth services are comparatively underdeveloped, with around 7,500 users.
- Many of these people receive services through the Department of Health’s Whole System Demonstrator (WSD) Pilot Programme
Telehealth: The ‘chasm’ between early adoption and mainstreaming
Adoption Spread Mainstreaming

Source: Barlow, Hendy, Chrysanthaki 2010

uptake time

Awareness
Project
Champion
Enthusia
Grants
Leadership
Evaluation
Evidence
Business

The King's Fund: Ideas that change health care
Key barriers

▷ A lack of robust evidence for the cost-effectiveness of telecare and telehealth
▷ The current high cost of deploying some of the technology ‘at scale’
▷ Risk aversion within the context of a cold financial climate
▷ Professionals and organisations adjusting to new ways of working
▷ The lack of a consumer market
▷ The lack of interoperability and minimum standards for the technology.
Key Drivers (required):

- Leaders, champions and entrepreneurs to empower and persuade
- Clarity of organisational goals
  - proactive involvement of providers and users
- Strong commissioners who can decommission some services and embrace new strategies
- Interoperability of technology – future-proofing
- Service redesign and service delivery – not just about the technology or product
- Evaluation and audit – i.e. proof!
Conclusions

- Telehealth and telecare have the potential to improve quality of life for users and to reduce unnecessary hospital and care home admissions.
- Considerable interest and policy momentum behind their adoption and diffusion in the UK.
- The technology is ready.
- More evidence is required to convince of the full potential of these innovations.
- Key challenge is on system redesign, cultural change and service developments rather than the technology *per se*.
References


