

## Reviewer's report

**Title:** The Use of Telehealth for Diabetes Management: A Qualitative Study of Clinician Perceptions

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 3 November 2006

**Reviewer:** Tracy Finch

### Reviewer's report:

#### General

This paper examines nurses' perceptions of a technology based system (Monitoring and Messaging Devices - MMDs) for that is designed to promote patients' self-management of their diabetes at home through regular reporting of clinical and health information relating to their condition. This is an important topic of enquiry, as home telehealth applications are increasingly being advocated as a solution to the problem of strained resources for chronic disease management. The paper is well written and presents useful insights into the use of telehealth for diabetes management and finishes with a thoughtful discussion that draws out key issues for further research and the potential practical value of the research (such as for assisting the development of self-management systems themselves and protocols for their use). In general, this is a well-written paper addressing an important topic and I feel it is appropriate for publication in Implementation Science with minor revisions.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

None

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. The introduction provides a good account of the relevant literature and makes clear the purpose of the paper. This could however, be enhanced further with reference to emerging research relating broadly to the field of telehealth on barriers and facilitators to implementation and 'normalisation', particularly since this broader research resonates well with the findings the authors report in the paper (eg. May CR, Harrison R, Finch T et al. Understanding the normalization of telemedicine services through qualitative evaluation. Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association 2003; 10: 596-604., but there is much more – See also Pamela Whitten, Frances Mair, Pascale Lehoux etc.).

2. The description of the MMD Programme appears insufficient for the reader to interpret the findings that follow, since telehealth services such as this can be configured in vastly different ways. I would advise that further details be included here about exactly what the system requires the nurse to do (make judgements about appropriateness, configure profiles for particular patients?, frequency of checking the system? Etc) and what it requires the patients to do (i.e. do they initiate contact or respond to prompts, how often, what measures do they have to take and send electronically?). Some of these details become apparent through the reporting of the results but additional detail here would make the rest of the paper clearer for the reader.

3. Given the small number of participants, I would suggest including some additional detail under 'sampling' concerning how many facilities were included (later on in the paper referred to as two facilities), and whether the ten participants were all the nurses who may have potentially used the service (i.e. were there other nurses not identified for the study because they didn't use the service?).

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

None

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.