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Conference abstract

Widening the role of NHS direct to support long-term health: integrating results from an evidence synthesis, qualitative research and patient survey

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Abstract

Introduction: Telehealth offers new ways to improve access and care quality for long-term conditions (LTCs). However, evidence about the costs and effectiveness of telehealth initiatives is mixed. Implementing them on a wide scale has been problematic. NHS direct provides an established platform which could integrate a range of technologies for LTCs.

Objectives: Through an NIHR-funded 5-year research programme, we will combine a systematic evidence synthesis, qualitative research, and a patient survey to develop a theory about which types of intervention potentially delivered by NHS direct are most likely to be cost-effective. We will then develop and test a programme of care within a randomised controlled trial with economic analysis.

Methods: The evidence synthesis updated an earlier review, paying particular attention to context (e.g. type of technology and patient). Qualitative research involved interviews with patients and health professionals, many involved in Birmingham Ownhealth. A postal survey of 3400 patients with LTCs from 34 general practices assessed patient factors and access factors associated with unmet need and willingness to use telehealth. Data were analysed to predict types of telehealth most likely to be acceptable to different patient groups.

Results and conclusions: Preliminary results will be presented at the conference.

Keywords

eHealth, internet, telephone, chronic disease, randomised controlled trial
