Conference Abstract

Bolton Relapse Prevention Project

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Abstract

Bolton Relapse Project: Alcohol dependent clients can relapse at many points throughout their recovery. Bolton Alcohol Services identified that the period following detoxification from alcohol was particularly problematic; large number of clients who had achieved abstinence from alcohol subsequently disengaged from treatment.

The assumption was that these people had relapsed; this was evident with a high re referral rate into the services. By using mobile phone technology the services aimed to better support clients to make the cognitive and behavioural changes necessary, in order to maintain longer term sobriety.

The project uses mobile phone technology in 2 ways;

• Provides text message appointment reminders and requesting confirmation of attendance.

• To support clients to put into practice the personal strategies that support cognitive and behavioural change, via daily individualised motivational text messages.

Project objectives were;

• Increase client engagement rate, across treatment providers.

• Reduced representations for treatment over a one year period.

• Reduce the costs to health and social care services as a result of repeated treatment episodes.

Alcohol dependency has range of health and social implications for not only the individual but their family; by supporting clients to maintain abstinence, a range of harms to society can be avoided.

Project Delivery: Clients are sent text messages to remind them of their next service appointment. They are asked to confirm whether they plan to attend.

Clients are also sent questions about their thoughts and behaviour and asked to respond in one of three ways; 1 to say they are doing OK, 2 to say they are struggling or 3 to say they are having difficulty. The clients reply illicits a personalised response, aimed at their self reported level of need.

Example;

Text question. How are you dealing with any cravings or urges for alcohol today?

Client Response 1.

Automated reply. Well done Graham I'm glad you are coping well.

Client response 2.

Automated reply; Try and distract yourself by doing some gardening Graham.

Client response 3.

Automated reply; The services will be in touch with you as soon as possible.

The services access an internet based dashboard where they can monitor responses and are alerted to those who have indicated a level 3 response.

Results: Quantative evaluation indicated that;

• engagement rates for clients engaged in the project were 72% compared to 57% for those clients who were not engaged with the project

• re referral rates for clients engaged on the project was 2% compared to 9% for those clients who were not engaged with the project.

• for each re referral avoided there was an estimated cost saving of between £14,326 and £47, 415

Qualitiative evaluation indicated that both service users and staff valued the project.

Conclusion: Bolton's relapse project has undoubtedly enhanced the efficiency of the alcohol treatment system; by utilising mobile phone technology to support evidence based service delivery, more clients have been able to make the necessary changes to their thoughts and behaviours in order to achieve their longer term goals.

Keywords

relapse; technology; alcohol; engagement; motivation

PowerPoint presentation:

https://www.conftool.pro/digital-health-care-2014/index.php?page=adminPapersDetails&path=adminPapers&form_id=22