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Conference Abstract

Carers Assistive Technology Service

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Abstract

Hull Churches Home from Hospital Service (HCHfH) has been at the forefront of bringing assistive technology into the homes of the elderly with chronic illness' through Telehealth projects since 2008. Over that period the organisation has had a steep learning curve both in terms of introducing assistive technology to an ageing population and familiarising them with the benefits they go on to experience, building a track record in ensuring assistive technology is used and not rejected, our major work currently involves remote monitoring of clients with cardiac conditions and COPD in the community.

HCHfH piloted an assistive technology project in 2013; The Carers Assistive Technology (CATs) project, aimed at supporting the local carers of dementia sufferers through the use of simple technological devices e.g. door charms, memo minders, digital photo albums and PARO the interactive seal cub.

Family caregivers of people living with dementia experience a high incidence of psychological distress and physical ill-health associated with caring which can reduce their life expectancy. The dominant causes of carer's distress include the person living with dementia associated behaviour that challenges, depression, anxiety, risk of falling, social isolation, emotional distress and continual 24 hour support without a break.

In 2011 HCHfH carried out a needs analysis, "The needs of informal carers of those living with dementia." Funded by the Department of Health, involving carers and people living with dementia. The study highlighted that family caregivers would like stimulating support for the person living with dementia and to be given confidence to take time out for themselves. The report indicated this support should be offered to them in their own homes.

The pilot aim was to evaluate the use of assistive and ambient technologies in the home of a person with dementia and to measure the effectiveness of the different types of technology available, allowing respite for the carer. Maximising the dementia patient's ability range within their own home environment, enabling the carer to have a more fulfilling lifestyle, while also facilitating their understanding of the process and evolution of End of Life Care of Dementia and the tools available to assist.

By supporting the carers and the patient with their abilities and maintaining their independence in their own home the CATs project aided their understanding of dementia, its stages and the equipment that is available to help with everyday life. It offered both practical and emotional support through a team of highly skilled and suitably qualified staff and volunteers. This

programme was particularly relevant as the service was driven by user needs and wishes, rather than a one-size-fits-all deployment mentality.

Using assistive technology in the homes of those living with dementia provided an opportunity for the carer to take a break and have a more productive life e.g. access to health care, continue employment and maintain relationships.

CATs showed how assistive technology can reduce the anxiety of a person living with dementia, keeping their brain working hard, allowing social interaction and involvement, whilst minimising the feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Keywords

assistive technology; support; maximize

PowerPoint presentation:

https://www.conftool.pro/digital-health-care-2014/index.php?page=adminPapersDetails&path=adminPapers&form_id=31
