An Evidence-Based Evaluation Tool to Assist Health Care Providers in Their Assessment of Effective mHealth Applications of the Management of Chronic Health Conditions

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Mobile health (mHealth) apps are considered a viable option to improve chronic disease management and desirable biometric outcomes. Healthcare providers are now recommending mHealth apps for patient use to assist in the management of chronic diseases. However, healthcare providers may have difficulty locating effective, evidence-based mHealth apps for patients due to the availability of over 325,000 health apps (Research2Guidance, 2017). Limited evaluation tools are available to assist healthcare providers in this process. Therefore, our goal was to develop an online mHealth evaluation tool to assist healthcare providers in the selection of evidence-based mHealth apps.

After creating a comprehensive pool of domains and mHealth features, healthcare providers provided feedback on the important and essential mHealth features. This feedback guided the development of an mHealth evaluation tool that included 6 domains and 32 mHealth features. Next, healthcare providers tested the mHealth evaluation tool via an online survey using pre-selected mHealth apps. The results of the proof-of-concept testing showed a strong match with the Gold Standard score that was determined by the research team. This proof-of-concept testing demonstrated the evaluation tool correctly identified high quality mHealth apps and provided essential feedback on future revisions to the mHealth evaluation tool.