

RESEARCH UPDATE

Christine Gould, PhD | Julia Loup

Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center, VA Palo Alto

New Opportunities

Volunteers needed to provide feedback on materials developed for VA mobile apps.

We created instructions to explain how to use three VA mobile apps. We are seeking volunteers to review our materials and provide feedback during a 1 hour interview. This is not a research study and there is no compensation. If you are interested in helping, please call Dr. Gould at 650-493-5000 extension 68899.

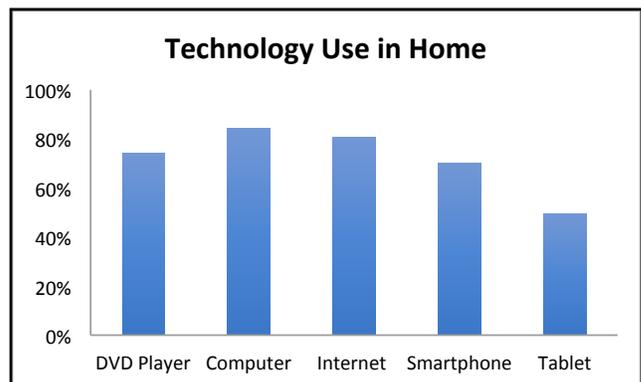
We will use the materials in a new clinical program called **Geri-Mobile Health**. Providers in the program will help Veterans use mobile apps to meet their mental health and well-being goals. We will share the final materials nationwide throughout the VA.

Thank you for participating in our study of technology use and preferences for self-management interventions. We created this newsletter to share our results. We also wanted to inform you of new programs that we developed as a result of the study.

Technology Study Findings

The VA has developed technology-delivered interventions for mental health; however, it is not clear which technologies Veterans aged 60 years or older prefer. We also undertook this study to gather information about what devices older Veterans' use in their home.

77 Veterans aged 60 years or older completed interviews. Of those interviewed, 74% of participants have internet



access in their home, but many others go to the library or other places to use the internet. 70% of participants own a smartphone, which is higher than the national average for older adults. Very few smartphone owners had downloaded an app related to mental health or well-being. Some participants discussed their difficulties with using devices such as computers or smartphones. Some also raised concerns about security and privacy of one's information on these devices. Others described having costly internet or



Research Opportunity: Study testing a new app for depression

We are currently looking for people to participate in an 8-week long study testing an app that teaches skills to manage depression symptoms. Smartphone users between the ages of 40 and 80 who are currently experiencing depression symptoms may qualify. To find out if you may qualify, call 650-493-5000, press 1, 1, extn 67023. Study appointments take place at the Palo Alto VA, and the study compensates up to \$80 for participation. For general information about participants' rights, contact 1-866-680-2906.

Julia Loup will be pursuing a doctorate in psychology University of Alabama. Aimee Zapata is a postdoctoral fellow at Kaiser Permanente.

smartphone bills. Hearing these concerns helps us know what issues could get in the way of using technology to deliver mental health and well-being interventions.

Our study focused on interventions that can be done on one's own, which is called self-help or self-management. These interventions may include a health care provider as a coach. During the interview, we described four different ways of receiving a mental health intervention. We found that printed materials were the most popular option. The second most popular option was

mobile apps, followed by internet, and DVDs. When compared with counseling, 66% preferred to try counseling first and 34% preferred using self-management first.

We also sought feedback to help make technology-based interventions easier

to use. Many participants wanted instructions and continuing technological support during the intervention. Many also described the importance of having the intervention be interactive and personalized to fit one's own situation.

New Educational Event: Older Americans Month

Based on strong interest in printed materials, the Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center shared printed materials about healthy aging, memory, and mental health with VA providers as a way to celebrate Older Americans Month in May. These materials were delivered to providers at Community Based Outpatient Clinics. The Center also shared information at the Farmer's Market at Palo Alto. Our goal for this event was to give providers useful materials to share with their patients.

