Impact Innovation: Utilizing mHealth Interventions to Advance Equity in the HIV Care Continuum

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What is mHealth?

- Digital health platforms
  - Prompt behaviors and self-monitoring
  - Provide summaries of behaviors
- Mobile devices (smartphones, tablets)
- Wearables (sensors, watches linked to apps)
Promise of mHealth

• Reach PWH where they are
• Connect PWH to care team or peers
• Enables care anywhere

• Convenient
• Popular
• Accepted
• Provide theory-based, evidence-based tools
Equity

**Equality:**
Everyone gets the same – regardless if it’s needed or right for them.

**Equity:**
Everyone gets what they need – understanding the barriers, circumstances, and conditions.
Sources of Inequity in Health & mHealth

Social determinants that cause disparities

- Language
- Urban/Rural
  - Race & ethnicity
- Country/World Region
- Income & education
- Reliable Internet access
- Cellular/smartphone access
- Continuity of email & phone number
Sources of Inequity in HIV Care

Pervasive STIGMA about:

- Poverty
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- HIV positivity
- Mental Illness
- Substance use
- Addiction
- History of incarceration
- History of being unhoused
- Rurality
Ethical concerns about mHealth interventions

• Could **worsen disparities**
• Typically tested/developed with PWH who are easy to reach
• Few address low literacy, Internet gap areas, and include diverse populations
  – (age group, race, gender, education level, disability, etc.)
Towards equity

- Ensuring access to mHealth
  - Lifeline phones for Medicaid recipients and other affordable connectivity programs with high speed data
  - Providing smartphones
  - Providing stipends for smartphone plans
  - Providing data hotspots in low Internet access areas
  - Training PWH to use the tools with ease
Towards equity

• Nothing about us without us
• From user-centered design to universal design
• Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance for:
  – Low hearing
  – Low vision
  – Color blindness
  – Need for hands-free devices/ speech based operation
Towards equity

• mHealth innovations in HIV care could increase:
  – Access to care
  – Maintenance in care
  – Enacting self-change
  – Reduction of stigma
  – Connection to care
  – Support to and from peers
Current state:
Towards a more equitable future of mHealth interventions for HIV care

- involvement of diverse subpopulations
- continual testing of features’ impact/usage
- including evidence-based features
- ensuring accessibility
- financial support for model mHealth programs
Wish list for the equitable future of mHealth interventions for HIV care

• Addressing every step of the HIV care continuum
• Addressing HIV prevention
• Addressing health promotion with diverse subgroups
• Continual improvement and iteration
• Full inclusion of people with and at risk for HIV
• Adequate financing of dissemination of proven tools
• Integration of tools into all care/prevention programs
Discussion

• What gaps or other needs should be considered for equity in mHealth for HIV?
• What else is working so far?
• What creative steps are being taken?
Thank you! Gracias!

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