From Screening to Survivorship: Leveraging Digital Health Applications in Cervical Cancer Treatment

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Description

Cervical cancer is still a major public health issue in low-income countries. It is the second largest cause of cancer in Thai women, after breast cancer. The success of cervical cancer program is related to the degree of information about the disease. A recent nationwide social media poll in Thailand discovered that nearly half of Thai women are unaware of cervical cancer, suggesting the need for additional health education intervention. Apps for mobile health (mHealth) have been recognized as useful instruments for improving population-level health outcomes. This health technology intervention enhanced a variety of health outcomes in a recent systematic evaluation of the use of mHealth applications in low- and middle-income nations.

Communicable diseases and maternal health were the most notable health results enhanced by mHealth applications. As a result, these results support the use of mobile health apps for health promotion in developing nations. Individuals are increasingly using mHealth applications for cancer knowledge as health education interventions. Many cancer information applications provide basic information about the disease's occurrence, risk factors, indications and symptoms, diagnosis, therapy, and monitoring methods. As a result, they may increase women's cancer knowledge and involvement in prevention and treatment programs. The majority of healthcare practitioners support the use of oncological applications. However, a significant number of gynecologic cancer apps are out of current, and some of the material is untrustworthy.

Furthermore, almost no users are engaged in the creation of apps. According to a prior research, only 1.5% (11 of 748) of gynecologic cancer applications was found to be both possibly useful and reliable. Because of concerns about the quality of mHealth apps, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have implemented rules governing mHealth app creation. However, many applications are not evaluated or certified before they are made available to the public.

High-quality mHealth apps can be used as novel interventions to overcome barriers to effective cervical cancer prevention and treatment by increasing cancer awareness and changing behavior in healthy women and cancer survivors, such as increasing screening uptake and adherence to follow-up.

Several studies, applications scoring system, and digital health scorecard method have outlined instruments for evaluating the quality of mHealth applications in cancer. A recent comprehensive study found and summarized 15 categories of quality evaluation criteria for mHealth apps for academics, makers, and consumers to evaluate the quality of the apps themselves.

Cervical cancer is a major public health issue in emerging nations. However, some app material may lack critical information for users in developing nations. As a result, researchers created a particular tool that uses previous studies' misunderstandings about cervical cancer as a tool for evaluation to guarantee that applications provide this information. The amount of app downloads and typical star evaluations in digital marketplaces may not be indicative of app quality. Only one app (NCCN Guidelines) was evaluated as good quality by all three assessment tools. However, the top three apps were decided differently by each assessment tool, confirming the absence of standardized quality assessment tools for mHealth applications. Only a few applications have been created by scientific organizations or healthcare providers, and the majority of creators are commercial firms. Apps created by scientific groups, according to authors previous study findings have good quality scores. Involving healthcare experts as collaborators or users during the creation process may improve the app's quality.