**Using FLO to engage patients on the Tayside Pain Management Programme**

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**Background and Aims**

The Tayside Pain Management Programme (PMP), which started in 2016, is an 11 week programme based on an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) approach. An audit revealed issues with both patient drop-out rates and ongoing engagement with programme tasks. There is evidence that mobile technologies can be a useful aid in improving task completion between sessions (Tang & Kreindler, 2017). Florence (FLO) is a home and mobile health monitoring system (Simple.uk.net) that uses a simple text messaging system to support people managing their own health conditions. FLO has been used successfully to support patients in services such as weight management and heart failure. This was a pilot project to assess the use of FLO as a tool to improve engagement with our PMP. Patients’ and clinicians’ experience of using FLO in an ACT based PMP were investigated.

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**Examples of FLO messages**

- “Hi, remember to discuss your values with family and friends before week 2, FLO”
- “How well are you getting on with pacing? Text P1: for ‘I’m struggling to do it’; P2 for ‘It’s not helping’; P3 for ‘It’s working well’ or P4 for ‘Not used it’.”
- “Hi, remember to complete your values homework exercises in your folder for the next session, FLO”
- “We missed you in group today. Looking forward to seeing you next week. Any problems, please call 01382 123456. FLO”

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**Methodology**

- **FLO pathway**
  - Explanation, information leaflet and consent form
  - Opt-in text
  - 2 x texts received by patient each week over 11-week PMP, plus additional messages as required
  - Patient and staff evaluation at end of course
  - Ongoing supportive text messages at fortnightly intervals until 3-month post-PMP review session
  - Further patient and staff evaluation at 3-month review session

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**Patient Feedback**

- “Good reminders and prompts”
- “Helped me to remember when the sessions were”
- “Personal feel to it”
- “Felt like someone was there”

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**Clinician Feedback**

- “Very easy to use”
- “Immediate contact with patients, without the need for phone calls”
- “Very flexible and responsive”
- “Saved lots of time”

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**Results**

Within this small pilot study, 80% of the PMP participants found the messages from FLO to be a useful/extremely useful part of the PMP. 100% of clinicians on the PMP felt it was a positive addition to the programme. All patients surveyed would recommend the use of FLO on future PMP groups. Patient feedback reported that the most helpful aspect of FLO was the reminders to complete homework and attend sessions.

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**Conclusion**

A successful pilot of the use of FLO in the Tayside PMP has been well received by both patients and clinicians. It is hoped that the increased professional support throughout the programme will encourage patients to take more responsibility for their self-management of their chronic pain condition. Patient feedback has been used to improve the process for future groups—including more frequent messages, sent earlier in the week. Clinicians have also begun to utilise the responses to questions generated by FLO to tailor future sessions within the PMP to more appropriately suit the needs of the individual patients. With ongoing use and data collection relating to the use of FLO, the PMP team hope to evaluate the impact on attendance rates and goal attainment. The project has also prompted ideas for the use of FLO in other areas of pain management, including exercise engagement, spinal cord stimulator support and post-procedure review.

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**References**


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