

Consumer electronics can help improve patient health

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Electronic tools and technology applications for consumers can help improve health care processes, such as adherence to medication and clinical outcomes like smoking cessation, according to a report by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The analysis of consumer health informatics, conducted by the Bloomberg School's Evidence-based Practice Center for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), was based on an examination of 146 published research studies of patient-focused electronic tools. It is among the first to explore the potential value of consumer health informatics.

Consumer health informatics applications are defined as any electronic tool, technology or electronic application designed to interact directly with consumers, with or without the presence of a health care professional, and that provides or uses individualized (personal) information to help a patient better manage his or her health or health care. Personalized informatics tools can include applications such as online health calculators, interactive computer programs to aid decision making, SMS text and email messages, which can be applied to a variety of clinical conditions, including cancer, smoking, diabetes mellitus, physical activity and mental health disorders.

"Consumer electronics are changing the way we shop, bank, communicate and even elect our presidents. We wanted to know if there was any evidence that these types of tools could impact health," said Michael Christopher Gibbons, MD, MPH, lead author and assistant

professor in the Bloomberg School's Department of Health, Behavior and Society. "In the future these tools may help make health care much more patient-centered and available when needed and not just available when the office is open. They may also help us improve health disparities by increasing patient access to health-improving treatments and interventions among the poor and uninsured."

Overall the analysis found no evidence that consumer health informatics harmed consumers. In addition, there was insufficient evidence to determine if consumer health informatics provided any economic or cost benefit.

More information: The full report is available at [www.ahrq.gov/downloads/pub/evi ... hiapp/impactchia.pdf](http://www.ahrq.gov/downloads/pub/evi...hiapp/impactchia.pdf)

Source: Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health ([news](#) : [web](#))

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