

South West epilepsy support technology part of national commissioning toolkit

September 9 2015, by Andrew Gould



Epilepsy Self Monitor (EpSMon), an app designed to help those with epilepsy monitor their condition and which was developed by researchers, clinicians and patient groups in the South West, has been

included as part of an epilepsy toolkit to be used by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in the NHS across the country.

EpSMon is a self-monitoring app aimed at people who experience seizures. It brings life-saving knowledge to the fingertips of people with [epilepsy](#) by allowing them to assess their risk every three months. It prompts them to see their doctor when their risks increase and suggests simple ways they can lower their risks.

The app, launched in July, is a world first and was developed by a team of partners, including clinicians, patients and health technology information experts, at Plymouth University, Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Royal Cornwall Hospital NHS Trust and SUDEP Action.

EpSMon helps to reduce risk by asking the questions that formed part of an axed GP monitoring service, including their last appointment about their epilepsy, information about seizures and their well-being. The app analyses the answers and creates advice ranging from 'all clear, no further action required' to 'make an appointment with your doctor now.' The app analysis can be shown to a GP to help them decide the best treatment regime for their patient going forward and helps facilitate meaningful person-centred communication of key risk issues.

In essence whilst a person with hypertension might use a domestic blood pressure device, someone with epilepsy can use the EpsMon app to check they have a planned review of their epilepsy in the future or go earlier if they are reporting a worsening of risk factors.

Dr Craig Newman, a research fellow from Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry who specialises in the use of mobile technology in health, and who is also a clinical psychologist, played an important role in the development of EpSMon. He said:

"It is great news that this technology has been adopted as part of the epilepsy commissioning toolkit for use by CCGs across the NHS. Its inclusion stands testament to its potential as a valuable asset for those with the condition."

Sammy Ashby, Policy and Development Officer for SUDEP Action has represented SUDEP Action in the development of the Epilepsy Commissioning Toolkit and worked with the team to ensure both the Check List and EpSMon are included in the final Toolkit. She commented:

"We are really pleased that both EpSMon and the SUDEP and Seizure Safety Check List have received such a positive response and are being included in the Commissioning Toolkit. This means that information about the two tools and how they can help support care provision for people with epilepsy will be accessible to any CCG who accesses the toolkit online. This is an important step towards patient safety nationally."

Dr Brendan McLean, Consultant Neurologist at the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, said:

"We are very pleased that our work here in Cornwall has been recognised at a national level, and we hope that this initiative will go a long way to helping patients in self managing their epilepsy and identifying risks to their seizure control early so avoiding harm and improving confidence."

Dr Rohit Shankar, a Consultant Neuro-Psychiatrist involved in the development of the EpSMon app with SUDEP Action said:

"I am delighted to see EpSMon and its precursor, the SUDEP and Seizure Safety Checklist, both of which have been developed in the

South West, included as part of the national epilepsy toolkit. Both tools give people with epilepsy access to information to help them manage their condition."

The toolkit is a web-based hub of information, advice and evidence needed to improve or commission epilepsy services for children and adults across their local area. It aims to help inform the decision making process of service design and/or improvements, guiding CCGs through the process with a mix of case studies, resources and tools they can use.

Provided by University of Plymouth

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