

Walking app is a step in the right direction for patient's fitness

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A walking app designed to assess and support physical activity in medical patients – in a simpler and more accessible way than many current methods—is being developed at the University of Strathclyde.

The app will enable patients to assess their own [fitness](#) by measuring the distance they can walk in six minutes. It is also based on a validated [fitness test](#) which is used to measure effects of exercise interventions in medical patients.

In addition to measuring and monitoring [physical fitness](#), it can act as a facilitator and motivator which can offer patients an incentive to boost their [physical activity](#).

Initially, the app—named 6MW-app (Six-Minute Walk) - is being tested in trials with [cancer patients](#) but could potentially be used for those with other conditions.

The study is being led by Dr. Liane Lewis, a Research Associate in Strathclyde's Department of Computer and Information Sciences.

She said: "Measuring patients' levels of fitness has many benefits in a clinical environment, such as assessment of pre-surgery fitness, a baseline measure for monitoring progress and facilitating conversation about physical activity.

"However, making these measurements is either resource-intensive, and therefore not easily accessible, or too subjective to be meaningful.

"We developed the Six-Minute Walk app for self-assessment of fitness using a mobile phone. Its simplicity could lead to it replacing current assessment practice and, unlike some other apps for walking, it measures fitness using a well-validated test developed for medical patients.

"The findings of our study will lead to the development of a tool that could improve levels of fitness and physical activity in [healthy people](#) and people living with illness alike. Clinicians have expressed interest in using the app as a tool for pre-surgery assessment and they see the

potential for it to be a motivator for physical activity beyond clinical intervention."

The app has been tested with healthy participants, who performed two fitness tests and completed a short survey. While the sample size was small, the results were found to be highly reliable and indicated that the app would be suitable for use in a non-supervised environment. Further tests are planned with a clinical population.

Provided by University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

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