

Jumilia L Conde
2127993

Assignment 2

Digital Skills and Research Methods
LCHS4002
Koushik Modak

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Introduction:

In this report I will be discussing the use of technology in the modern-day health care sectors and how it has shaped the way health care is provided to us in recent times compared to subsequent years. As per the Merriam-Webster dictionary [1] technology is defined as the practical application of knowledge especially in a particular area. During COVID19 we saw a massive rise in the use of technology especially in General Practices (GPs). According to the NHS, GPs are places where medical practitioners treat all common medical conditions and refer patients to hospitals and other medical services for urgent and specialist treatment. The majority of healthcare services were provided through virtual means, impacting their overall accessibility and efficiency. Figures from NHS England show outpatient attendances taking place via telephone or telemedicine increased from 4% in February 2019 to 35% in April 2019.

(Figure source) <https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/files/2020-12/QWAS/digital-and-remote-care-in-covid-19.html#9>

Different Technologies in Health and Social Care Environments:

There are many different technologies that health care professionals use today to provide us with the care that we receive today. However, before we get into that we need to go back in time when we never had the advanced technology that we have today. Before we had robots and handheld digital screens to perform the great care, we get today we simply had computers and I'm not talking about laptops that you can move around whenever you want I'm referring to big heavy computers that had many different wires coming out of it. According to an article that I read online [2] back in 1960 there had been discussions on how incorporating computers and technology could potentially improve the way we practice medicine. They thought that having a computer could help doctors get the results of medical procedures sooner, they thought that it could help lower the number of medical errors done by care givers because they could have reminders of who needed what, when they needed it, what they have had already so they do not double the medication and have access to patient's medical records faster. Even though the idea of involving technology to health care was discussed there was loads of debates and research done into it as they also had to evaluate the risk and advantages of it and the financial aspects of it, so they didn't put it into action until the late 90's to early 2000's. In my opinion I believe that it was a great decision to bring on technology into health care as it has made things so much better and faster from receiving care, getting an appointment and being seen, but at the same time things have gotten slower in some places.

Main body:

In the modern world that we live in today, the ability to find information using secondary research is commonly recognised. The reason for this is due to the fact

that technological advancements are in place every day, thus meaning that new information is always available at any given moment should it be required by either an individual or a group, or even companies and businesses.

Technology in health care is a factor that has brought many benefits to the way in which the health care sector is heavily considered as the most important service available, from machinery used in hospitals, to communication services that are available now that previously were not. As a result of the pandemic taking place, it has now meant that for GPs, the frequency of people contacting via use of technology has now increased tenfold, due to the fact that members of the general public are reluctant to visit walk-in centres due to how the pandemic has conditioned them as a result of being at home for a long period of time. According to studies from Pharma Times, an article published in 2020 showed that technological advancements are key to providing aid to general practices, and this can be shown by the fact that in some general practices, there is technology such as tablets that are available upon entry at the GP. As well as this, there is also the option of being able to search online for diagnosis as opposed to having to wait to enter the GP for the same results.

There has also been the introduction to mobile applications to allow for members of public who perhaps cannot get to their local practice to be able to receive consultation via video calls or interactive pages that are available and easy to access. In light of the pandemic having taken place, there was the introduction to the NHS Track and Trace application, which was introduced to monitor the health of individuals in a surrounding area where COVID19 was located. You were also able to submit tests and were then given advice surrounding the symptoms of COVID19. This subsequently led to the introduction of more calls via the 111 helpline as members of the public were required to call regarding any issues with health, which in turn minimised call handling time as there were now multiple services available for customers to use, whenever there were any immediate signs of worry. Technology now has been developed to a level of whereby it is accessible in more ways than what was previously available to them prior to the development of it, which in turn has led to an increase in people using their mobile phone in recent times, due to efforts being made to introduce new means of being seen by health professionals. This increase of commonality makes it so that all parties involved are satisfied or close to satisfaction.

What this pandemic has also allowed for, is at the most basic of levels, due to the sheer necessity of people being seen at all costs, going remote instantly allows for more factors in other critical areas of the NHS to get more attention given to them and this is important for more life-threatening sectors to receive the attention that it would have otherwise not had, as it allows for better transmissions. Blogs had declared that the introduction to remote sites, as well as including social distancing and lockdown measures, provided less risk of members of the general public catching any form of infection, which also improves reasoning. As a result of this,

GPs have been able to also reap the benefits as well because of how common it was that people would try and visit for the most minor of issues.

Reference Page:

[1] <https://www.britannica.com/technology/technology> [viewed on the 2/9/2022]

[2] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2795587/> [viewed on the 1/9/2022]

PharmaTimes. 2022. Technologies that could aid GP practices. [online] Available at: <https://www.pharmatimes.com/thought_leadership/technologies_that_should_be_encouraged_to_a_id_gp_practices_1340610> [Accessed September 5, 2022].

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