Patient’s perceptions of the use of iPad technology during speech language therapy

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Introduction:
• iPad use in therapy is becoming increasingly common as a speech language therapist’s tool.
• Recent research confirms the benefit of using specific applications (apps) as a tool when used in conjunction with therapeutic principles.
• In the unique South African context it is unknown how socio-economic and historical and political factors may influence the use of such technology.
• This study looks at individuals with aphasia living in a care facility who have been exposed to iPads during speech therapy and their perceived benefits and barriers to iPad usage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages &amp; disadvantages of iPads</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓Portable, less therapy equipment needed</td>
<td>✓Expensive start up cost</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓Available to the Public</td>
<td>✓Can be misused as therapeutic tool</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓Cost-Efficient (Devices &amp; Apps)</td>
<td>✓Requires internet connection to download apps</td>
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<td>✓Language Barrier Aid</td>
<td>✓Majority of speech therapy apps are not adult appropriate</td>
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<td>✓Interactive &amp; Engaging</td>
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<td>✓Easy to update/download new app</td>
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<td>✓All Ages</td>
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Results:
• Only one participants commented that they found the technology overwhelming and a difficult concept to understand
• In general participants found the pictures easy to see, instructions clear & voice easy to understand (American accent)
• Minimal assistance needed from the therapist after basic training
• Participants felt that initially they struggled to complete activities as they were focused on technical aspects like the touch screen.
• After they were more familiar with the device 14 of the 15 participants reported greater satisfaction in therapy and reported iPad use as a new skill they had learnt
• Participants liked the rating system and the ability to see overall performance at the end of an activity – this was also seen as a motivating factor
• All participants felt that the activities were relevant and would benefit them in achieving their goals
• Half of the participants felt that apps could be improved if content was available in our home language

Implications & Conclusion:
• Perceived benefits such as ease of use, clear photographs and pictures, interactive tool, enjoyment and the potential use of iPad apps being used independently as home programmes.
• Identified barriers were found to include access to technology, reluctance to use technology due to generation gap, apps only available in English and 1 in isiZulu, initial cost of device and the need for training on how to use the technology.
• iPad therapy has great potential in the South African context where therapists may have limited resources available.
• The iPad appears to have many benefits over traditional therapy tools and appears to be valuable in the South African elderly aphasia population.

Method:
• A total of 15 participants (6 females & 9 males) took part in the pilot study over 2 months.
  1. All participants were residents at Park Care Frail Care Centre, Vodacom CtW Programme, Health Communication Research Unit & University of the Witwatersrand
  2. All participants were receiving speech therapy for aphasia.
  3. Participants had to be exposed to iPad usage during therapy a minimum of 10 times to allow for suitable understanding of the technology and its use in therapy.
  4. Residents must have no prior exposure to iPads or visual or hearing difficulties
• Convenience sampling was used and informed consent (adapted) was obtained from all participants
• Participants were asked 15 questions and asked to rate their answers on an adapted rating scales.
• Tactus Therapy Solutions Ltd range of apps were chosen as they provide a diverse range of adult apps