

Challenges for Remote Patient Monitoring Programs in Rural and Regional Areas: A Qualitative Study

Authors

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The challenge

People living in rural and regional communities often face barriers to healthcare access, which may affect health outcomes. Remote patient monitoring (RPM) offers a potential solution, but there is limited understanding of the factors influencing its adoption in these communities.

What we did

We partnered with healthcare professionals in Western Victoria, Australia to explore how Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) is used in practice. Through in-depth discussions, we identified key barriers and uncovered opportunities to enhance its adoption.

What we found

The research identified key barriers to RPM adoption in rural and regional healthcare, including:

- **Patients:** A one-size-fits-all approach does not work. Many patients struggle with low digital literacy, language barriers, or lack of access to technology, while others prefer in-person, relationship-based care.
- **Healthcare System:** Inequitable and fragmented digital infrastructure, workforce shortages, and a lack of standardized training prevent effective RPM implementation.
- **Policy Gaps:** Challenges such as funding limitations and unequal access to digital infrastructure make it difficult to scale RPM in rural settings.

Addressing these challenges requires a **collaborative approach across healthcare providers, policymakers, and researchers** to create sustainable and effective RPM solutions.

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What does this mean for stakeholders?

- **Healthcare Providers:** Adapt RPM programs to fit the needs of rural communities by combining in-person care with digital solutions. Invest in staff training to support effective implementation.
- **Policymakers:** Bridge the digital divide by funding rural health infrastructure, improving internet access, and supporting policies that make RPM financially sustainable.
- **Researchers & Academic Institutions:** Partner with healthcare providers and policymakers to co-design and evaluate RPM solutions that are evidence-based, practical, and scalable.

Reference

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The DELIVER Research Project:

- Identifies what the people and healthcare providers of western Victoria need most in terms of home-based healthcare services
 - Designs and tests the best way to deliver these services, so that home-based healthcare services will continue to grow and improve across the region and beyond
 - Supports the growth of research in western Victoria, so that future research findings can quickly be translated to improvements in healthcare
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