PROJECT SUMMARY

Enhancing Depression & Anxiety Care: Combining a Walk-In Clinic and Remote Symptom Tracking

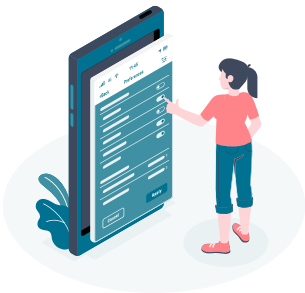
Background. In the United Kingdom, one in six people aged 18 or over report symptoms of a common mental health problem such as anxiety or depression. The best ways for GP practices to support people with depression are not fully understood. However, new digital technologies are being created to help, which include apps for desktops, mobile phones and tablets.

Here we show findings from a research study funded by Innovate UK, the UK's innovation agency, and carried out at GP surgeries in Faversham, Kent. The study tried to understand if **a new 'walk-in' clinic for people with low mood, anxiety and depression** could help people recover better and sooner. This was piloted for one year and the **clinic provided people with a range of therapy options** including medication, counselling and lifestyle advice alongside **i-spero©, an app designed to support people to manage their depression** and help professionals track progress.

The clinic was evaluated by a team of researchers from the University of Kent, who aimed to understand how well the clinic was working, whether those using the clinic had a good care experience, whether their symptoms and wellbeing improved and how much the clinic costs.

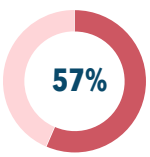
Findings.

There is a greater rate of severe depression in the locality than the national average and the new clinic provided help to local people with low mood and anxiety. **After 6 months, people using the new clinic felt significantly better than people who attended standard GP appointments.**

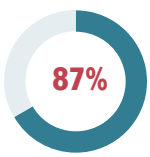


Healthcare professionals found i-spero© particularly useful to help make decisions about treatment and monitor care. 87% of service users found i-spero© easy to use and 76% were happy for i-spero© to inform their care. However, using the technology was found not to be suitable for everyone, due to the severity of their condition, age, digital skills or other reasons.

of people using the new clinic were happy with the care received

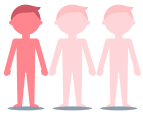


of people using the new clinic said it exceeded their expectations

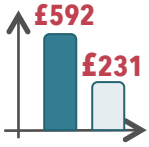


of people using the new clinic would use i-spero© again

two thirds of people experienced improvement in their condition



one third of people recovered from their condition within six months

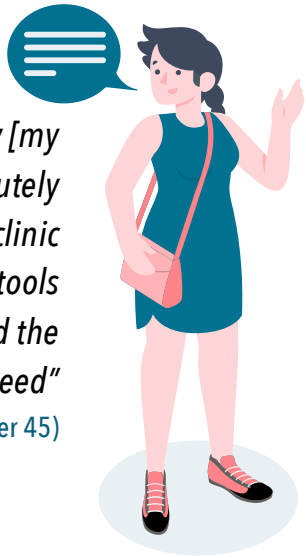


per-person average total cost of health and care services are higher for those who used the clinic than those who did not

What service users and staff said:

"I felt that I was getting someone's complete attention who understood the nuances of my condition and had the time to think about it. I think that worked"
(Service User 20)

"I can safely say [my improvement] is absolutely down to accessing the clinic because I've now got the tools and the access and the support that I think I need"
(Service User 45)



"You just need to look at the scores and you can see people are improving… I think that's actually boosting the confidence of the staff because they can all see that, and it makes them feel proud that they are helping people"
(Operational Staff Focus Group)

"[The i-spero© technology] clinically improves my management. I do think people get better quicker when we use it, absolutely. I've got quite a lot of examples of that"
(Clinic Staff Member 01)

Going forward.

There is a need to continue to find new and better ways to support people with low mood, anxiety and depression in their community and enhance GP services. The clinic has gained additional funding to continue to support people with mental health conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings and recommendations have been fed back to the GP practices and will be shared widely to help plan future support of this kind for people with low mood, anxiety and depression. It is hoped that these findings contribute to the efforts to continue this type of care in Faversham, and starting similar initiatives elsewhere in the region and across the UK.

Want to know more? You can download the full Evaluation Report here: https://kar.kent.ac.uk/84843/

Billings, J, Rees-Roberts, M, MacInnes, J, Saloniki, E, Jaswal, S, Mikelyte, R & Borthwick, R (2020) *Optimising the Depression Pathway Enabled by Novel Digital Assessment Technology: Final Evaluation Report.* CHSS, University of Kent

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Evaluated by: CHSS University of Kent

Images: Freepic.com