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Nurses readiness to use telehealth in the west of scotland

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Background: Technology plays an increasing role in supporting, innovating and shaping the lives of people around the world. Technological advancements involving mobile technologies are transforming how people interact and communicate with each other (Scottish Government 2011, 2013). Multiple studies have examined the issue of acceptance and technology adoption in health services around the world. Nurses have been slow to accept, adopt and lead on the use of Telehealth in their job roles. Several authors acknowledge this is a neglected area of research for nurses and the impact this has on their professional identity and competencies.

Design: This quantitative study utilised an online survey design to obtain a convenience sample of pre and post qualified nurses (N=800) to determine their readiness and acceptance to use telehealth. The Unified Theory of Use and Acceptance of Technology (UTUAT) was modified with permission to reflect its application to telehealth and nursing. Ethical approval was granted by UWS ethics committee.

Results: 244 pre and post registration nurses undertook the survey accounting for a 30% response rate. 52% were pre-registration and 48% post-registration. Participants were drawn from all areas of clinical practice with a wide range of clinical experience. Participants knowledge of telehealth is good however 77% identify they do not use telehealth in their job role. Nearly all participants (95%) identify that they need to develop their skills in IT, use of equipment such as smart phones and video conferencing facilities.

Conclusions: This study provides a baseline description of the knowledge, skills and acceptance to use technology by nurses in the West of Scotland. The results add to the growing body of evidence around telehealth acceptance and the role of nurses. Further research is planned to understand the nurses experience of use pre and post an educational intervention.

Keywords: nurses, telehealth, knowledge, skills and acceptance.

Biography:

Audrey Cund is a Mental Health Nurse Lecturer and PhD student at the University of the West of Scotland. Audrey has extensive experience in higher education and over 20years in clinical practice. She has a keen interest in research and has published in the area of alcohol education, holistic care, innovation in higher education and self-management. Her current interests lie in self-management, Telehealth and the role technology plays in caring for individuals.

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Page 59