

ENHANCING LIVES THROUGH TECHNOLOGY, INTRODUCING ALEXA

Older Adult Mental Health
Aberdeenshire Occupational Therapy Service

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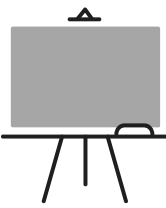


BACKGROUND



The Occupational Therapy (OT) Service has been exploring the benefits of early intervention strategies which support individuals with a cognitive impairment to maintain their independence.

A technology workshop by Alzheimer Scotland was attended, this highlighted the potential to use the Amazon Echo, as part of OT interventions.



AIM

To explore the use of mainstream technology to support people with cognitive impairments to enhance their daily living.



POLICY



- Connecting People, Connecting Support (Alzheimer Scotland, 2017).
- Technology Charter for People living with Dementia in Scotland Alzheimer Scotland (Alzheimer Scotland, 2016).
- Dementia Assessment, management and support for people living with Dementia and their Carers (NICE, 2018).

METHOD

3 individuals with a mild or moderate cognitive impairment, and with pre-existing co-morbidities (visual impairment, communication difficulties etc) were selected following OT assessment.



OT assessments identified that individuals were experiencing difficulty completing important tasks such as:

- medication management
- maintaining a routine and structure
- orientation
- health and wellbeing



Using a Cognitive Rehabilitation Approach, OT's supported individuals and their carers to introduce and embed the Amazon Echo into their daily routines. 4 - 6 home visits were carried out, in order to monitor and review the interventions effectiveness.

RESULTS

Individuals reported an increase in independence in the following activities of daily living.



Medication Management



Access their diary/calendar



Access the radio & music



Access daily news & weather updates



Orientate themselves to time and date



Access relaxation techniques & manage anxiety related symptoms

BENEFITS

To the individual



- Learnt new skills.
- Maintained pre-existing skills.
- Increased confidence, self efficacy and self worth.

To the Carer's

- Carer's were able to remotely update the Amazon Echo on or offsite.
- History feature, allowed carers to review what questions the individual had asked the Amazon Echo over the course of the day.
- Amazon Echo can be asked the same question many times, and never get frustrated.



To Services



- Potential to delay a formal package of care (2 individuals did not require a formal medication prompt from care providers).



IMPLICATIONS



- Individual's functional and cognitive abilities need to be fully assessed, as the Amazon Echo will not be suitable for all. Thus increasing the need for OT Functional Assessment.
- Limited evidence based research available at present.
- Limited resources for further development and training for therapists.

CONCLUSION

Using an intervention that focuses on a Cognitive Rehabilitation and Person-Centred Approach, individuals were facilitated by technology to engage in tasks they previously felt unable to complete.

A small sample of individuals have utilised the Amazon Echo, and the initial findings identified that it could be used as an effective intervention to enhance the quality of life of individuals with a cognitive impairment.

FEEDBACK



Individuals and carers provided positive feedback.....

"Reminds me to take my tablets, lock my door at night and makes sure I have taken something out of the freezer for my lunch the next day"

"I really enjoy using it"

"Causes me less worry"

"Relaxation sounds, clears my mind and helps me to sleep"

WHAT'S NEXT



- To continue to utilise the Amazon Echo as part of OT interventions and gain further evidence on its effectiveness.
- To identify appropriate learning opportunities to further develop therapists knowledge and skills.