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Use and Useability of Personal Alarms

Presented by Linda Tran





Tailored solutions.
Greater independence.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Noongar peoples of the Whudjak region, on which we meet today and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respect to them and their cultures and to Elders past and present.



Background

- Indigo is a Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) provider delivering the Goods, Equipment and Assistive Technology (GEAT) service.
- Personal alarms frequently funded through GEAT
- Current evidence suggests that older people do not use their personal alarm in the event of an emergency

*What are the factors associated with
successful uptake and sustained use
of personal alarms?*



Methods

- Phase One: Surveys
 - Telephone survey commenced December 2020
 - 121 clients participated (29% response rate)
- Phase Two: Interviews
 - Follow-up telephone interviews with 18 clients
- Phase Three: Focus group
 - Conducted with Indigo staff via a video call



Findings: Users and Non-Users



Perceptions of the Personal Safety Alarm

“It makes you feel very safe, because you know that if you do fall over there's going to be someone to call you... it gives me the peace of mind.”

Factors Influencing Alarm Use

Thought it looked like *“a reasonably strange ornament to wear on your clothes”* but that *“at my age, you're entitled to be a bit quirky.”*

Perceptions of Service Provision

“Well, I think there should be more follow up. There should be somebody that comes out and says ‘look, we're giving you a personal alarm, do you know how to use it?’ And you can say, ‘no’. Alright, then let's sit down and we'll work it out. But as I said there was nothing like that, I was just handed the box with the personal alarm in it, nothing else, and I'm never going to follow directions on the thing I've got to get a magnifying glass out. As I said, it's definitely not made for older people.”

Findings: Prescribers



- Referrals driven by assessors and family members
- Non health professional vs. health professional
- Difficulty using the technology
- Aesthetics have an impact
- Financial implication of non-use

Findings

**Financial and
contextual
considerations
at prescription**

**Clinical
prescription**



Alarm Design

**In-person
assistance & set up**

**Patient involvement
during prescription**

Recommendations



- Assessment and Prescription
 - Assessment and prescription by an OT in-person and guided by evidence-based framework to ensure a wide range of factors considered
 - Human Activity Assistive Technology (HAAT) model
 - Ask “Is a personal alarm indicated?”
 - Consider why a personal alarm being requested
 - Being an older adult does not automatically mean a personal alarm is required

Recommendations

- Alternatives
 - Strategies to prevent falls from occurring (Stay On Your Feet)
 - Provide education about how to get up off the floor (Stay On Your Feet)
 - Explore features of existing mobile phone
 - SOS
 - Voice recognition

STAIRS, STEPS AND LADDERS

○ Are your stairs, steps and ladders safe?

Check that stairs, steps and ladders are not too high, narrow, uneven or in need of repair. This includes steps into your bath or shower and steps outside of your home. If using a ladder make sure someone else is home.

○ Do your stairs and steps have easy to reach sturdy grab rails or a ramp fitted?

Request an Occupational Therapy Home Assessment to find out what is best for your situation.

○ Are your stairs and steps kept free of hazards?

Keep objects or clutter out of your path. If you have hard to see steps or stairs consider non-slip contrast tape or paint for the edges.

Actions



Recommendations

- Consider if the alarm will be used
- Trial
 - Show photos/videos
 - Liaise with suppliers
 - Returns policies
 - Trial different options
- Provide follow-up and ongoing support



Research Team

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Questions?



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