Digital technology for Home Assessment practice: experiences from a sub-acute care team  Kylie Watson & Kaitlyn Spalding - Occupational Therapy, RBWH

Background
Occupational Therapy (OT) pre-discharge home assessments play a key role in facilitating timely, safe and successful discharge from hospital. Home assessments are associated with better health outcomes, including reduced rates of falls and hospital re-admission. More health services are embracing mobile devices, such as an iPad, to maximise productivity. Therefore, consideration of this strategy to improve efficiency of OT Home Assessment practice is warranted.

Aims
To evaluate if less time is needed for home assessment and documentation using the iPad; and if using the iPad is a positive experience for therapists.

Methods
An Ethics Waiver was granted. Two sub-acute OT teams completed two different home assessment methods:

1. Using an iPad + home modifications apps
2. Using usual methods of pen and paper.

After a three-month period, a retrospective audit of clinical practice was completed of clinical time taken for documentation and number of recommendations. A survey was also completed to explore practitioner experiences.

Results
Therapists using the iPad took on average 30 minutes less in assessment time, and 60 minutes less in documentation time than those using pen and paper. Therapists using pen and paper appeared to make almost twice as many recommendations, and those using iPad appeared to make more than double the amount of diagrams.

Therapists using the digital technology were more satisfied then those using usual methods with confidence levels appearing similar for both methods. Themes of efficiency of practice and improved quality of home diagrams were reported:

"[iPad] allows assessment to be completed in real time and reduces amount of documentation needed to be done in the office"

"[pen and paper] diagrams are not always neat and not consistent between therapists. Sometimes elements are missed"

Conclusion
Therapists experiences of using digital technology in home assessments indicate it is a reasonable practice procedure for the sub-acute setting. Using digital technology can enable therapists to maximize their productivity. These results will go towards helping the service prepare for transition to a digital hospital.

Contact  Kaitlyn Spalding - Email: kaitlyn.spalding@health.qld.gov.au  /  Kylie Watson - Email: kylie.watson@health.qld.gov.au

References available on request