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Conference Abstract

## **Age is no barrier to using healthcare technology: A mobile working demonstration of cognitive assessment and training for the elderly**

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## **Abstract**

Sustaining independence as we age is highly dependent on good cognitive health. Cognitive impairment, especially memory impairment, is often the earliest feature of dementia. According to the Alzheimer's Society (2014), one in three people over 65 in the United Kingdom will develop dementia. The Department of Health (2013) has stressed that raising the diagnosis rates of dementia is key to helping support this group of people, their families and carers. There is a critical role for care technology to help improve the timely access to cognitive assessment and treatment for the aging population.

For Central London Community Healthcare (CLCH), care technology is a key part of our out of hospital care. We provide community and in-patient services to almost one million people across the London boroughs of Barnet, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, and Westminster. In December of 2013, Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea Community Rehabilitation Services piloted a mobile working solution. Mobile working is the ability to work anywhere, irrespective of time and place. In the context of community health services, mobile devices provide our community clinicians with real time access to valuable patient information and to document at the point of care. The mobile working solution provided the clinicians with a range of multidisciplinary assessment tools including the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA). The MoCA is a rapid screening instrument for mild cognitive dysfunction.

The aim of the presentation is to showcase the unique interaction between client, clinician and technology by providing a demonstration of the mobile working solution that supports cognitive assessment and retraining. A client's different cognitive domains such as attention and concentration, executive functions, memory, language, visuoconstructional skills, conceptual thinking, calculations, and orientation will be assessed on a tablet. Following the assessment, an example of a treatment activity using a cognitive retraining App will be given. A case study will also be discussed to illustrate how technology and mobile working is facilitating new ways to shape cognitive goal setting and treatment planning for older clients.

At CLCH, the mobile working project has demonstrated that age does not have to be a barrier to the use of new technology. Care technology can play an important role in the future of community healthcare to be able to assess and treat cognitive impairment. Furthermore, this type of care

technology may contribute to improved communication about the cognitive needs of older clients and in turn, facilitate better personalised care by making timely onward referrals to specialist memory services for rapid diagnosis and management of dementia.

## **Keywords**

**mobile working; community rehabilitation; ageing; cognition; dementia**

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