The Evaluation of a Telemedicine Planning Framework Based on Needs Assessment

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Background

A telemedicine planning framework was developed based on needs assessment. It consists of two phases divided into six parts. Phase one comprises access and needs assessment (data collection) , while Phase two involves priority setting analysis .The developed framework was applied in one community and evaluated by an expert panel.The aim of this study was to evaluate the developed telemedicine planning framework, using an expert panel.

Methods

A range of experts in telemedicine and planning health services were sought to establish the expert panel. The total panel included 11 participants. The panel members were asked to review a summery document about the framework, and the practical guide developed to explain how to apply the framework. The process of evaluation consisted of two voting rounds, following the RAND-UCLA appropriateness method. Round one, involved an expert panel meeting and a formal voting process, followed analysis of voting and a second voting round. The panel were asked to rate each part of the framework, and its relevant practical guide application, with a score from one to nine based on compliance with the selected criteria.

Results

There are six parts in the practical guide. Edits were applied to the practical guide following voting round one, but no changes to the framework were required. Following round two, Parts 3-6 were rated compliant with all the criteria elements. Parts 1-3 had 5 elements rated 'Undecided', with disagreement within the panel on the potential to collect data in relation to accessibility and capacity to collect required data. With some panel members feeling it was more feasible than the others. There were no 'non-compliant' ratings for the framework or guide.

Conclusion

A framework and a practical guide for planning telemedicine services based on needs assessment, was developed and evaluated, to provide guidance in the assessment of the needs.

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