TheraText

By: Ammar Bhaiji, Amit Bhat, Advait Marathe, Samarth Bhutani

The Need

Mental health, both culturally and politically has always been under-resourced in our country. (1)

Mental health professionals are in large shortages, and there are not enough resources to check-up on patients in between visits.

Because of this, patients must wait long waits and cannot have often visits with clinicians and other mental health professionals.

The Solution

The solution is TheraText, a system which takes in text messages that patients send to our hotline, judge a patient's response and assign a value to it. Clinicians can then respond to these texts with genuine responses.

This will give an objective way for clinicians and mental health care coordinators to ensure patients are doing well between long stretches of time, which is currently virtually non-existent in healthcare.

This would do a great deal to increase patient satisfaction and quality of care by doing more for continuous care.

Further Steps for Market-Ready Status

There would need to be a careful legal and ethics review to ensure that the product is completely HIPAA compliant.

In addition, to refine the algorithm and the program as a whole, more data is necessary to complete and fully flesh out the program.

How to Implement

With increased use of phones, and especially text messaging, SMS is an important and useful tool for quick and easy communication.

Healthcare systems can purchase the tool and can implement it with their list of patients at low cost, requiring only a server and the product itself.

A system of initial responders with medical training will help respond to messages and can forward messages and information to their patient clinician or therapist.

Initial cost will be high due to training and hiring of enough initial responders, but marginal cost will be lower.

Resources

(1) https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMsa1413512