

Royal College of General Practitioners and Warwick Medical School
Annual Education, Research and Innovation Symposium
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PRESENTER'S DETAILS – Session B. Children and Younger People		
Title (Prof, Dr, Mr, Mrs) Dr	First Name Carol	Surname Bryce
Department or organisation WMS, Social Science and System in Health E-mail c.bryce.1@warwick.ac.uk		
Category Audit, Research , Education Project, Innovation Project		
Authors Frances E Griffiths, Helen Atherton, Jack R Barker, Carol Bryce, Jonathan AK Cave, Kathryn Dennick, Melina Dritsaki, Vera Forjaz, Jo Fraser, Caroline Huxley, Agnieska Ignatowick, Sung-Wook Kim, Peter Kimani, Jason J Madan, Harjit Matharu, Luhanga Musumadi, Moli Paul, Gyanu Raut, Sailesh Sankaranarayanan, Anne-Marie Slowther, Mark A Sujan, Paul A Sutcliffe, Frances Taggart and Jackie Sturt		Title of Study: Engaging young people with long term conditions through digital communication (the LYNC study): timely communications and managing the patient-clinician relationship.
What's the problem you are tackling? Young people living with long term conditions often disengage from health services resulting in poor health outcomes and additional cost for the NHS. Digital technologies have the potential to improve communication between patients and health care teams, contributing to better health outcomes in a population group familiar with using such technologies.		
How did/will you do it? Funded by the UK NIHR, the study evaluated the impacts of digital clinical communication for young people living with long term conditions and analysed critically its use by 20 specialist care teams from across England and Wales. Employing a mixed methods case study approach the team undertook an analysis of data generated through interviews and observations of practitioner and patient communication. Over 300 interviews and observation notes were analysed. We interrogated the data to find what works, in what circumstances, for whom and why.		

What did you find?

Of greatest importance to clinicians and young people was the timeliness of communications, conceptualised as engaging with the right person, at the appropriate time, to enable effective condition management. Different digital technologies were useful for different purposes but establishing clear ground rules was key to managing patient expectations. Establishing rules and boundaries allayed concerns that communications would be missed or workloads would be overwhelmed. Direct communications with the team enhanced patient – clinician relationships through breaking down barriers. Young people saw digital communications as less formal which encouraged them to make more contacts, enhancing clinic appointments. Text and email allowed for asynchronous communications, welcomed by patients for convenience and clinicians to allow for measured responses to queries.

Why does this matter?

Patients with long term conditions are managed between specialist clinics and GPs and digital technologies can aid in improving communications between all three. Our research was done with young people with long term conditions requiring specialist care. As more of the population use mobile digital communication the findings may have relevance to older people with long term conditions, who are often under the care of their primary care team.