


Transforming Early Detection of Underlying Health Conditions Using Digital Innovation in Dentistry

Aim Statement

Bridging the gap between dentistry and general practice with digital transformation
Dentists are in an ideal position to assume an expanded role in primary care.¹ With the right technology, they could spot unknown underlying health conditions in their patients.
The app Lifelight was chosen by the AHSN for this project as it is a radically new way of measuring a patient's vital signs, contactlessly, using an iPad.

Project Design

An iPad with the Lifelight app was located at SmileKind, a specialist dental clinic in Bournemouth, Dorset. Patients who consented to using Lifelight were given a questionnaire to complete. Staff were given information cards for the patient to give to their GP in the event it was recommended they booked an appointment based on their Lifelight results.

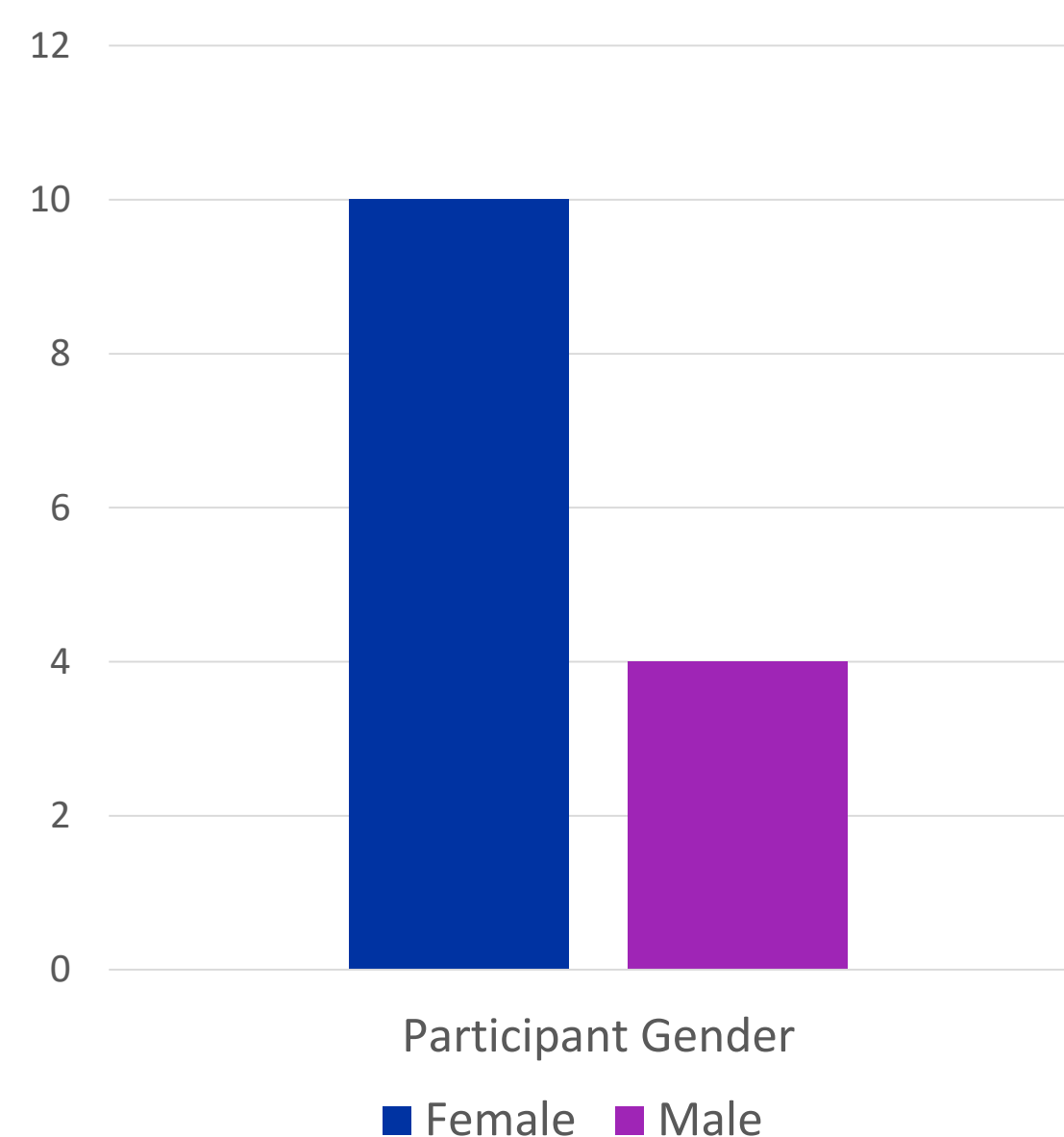
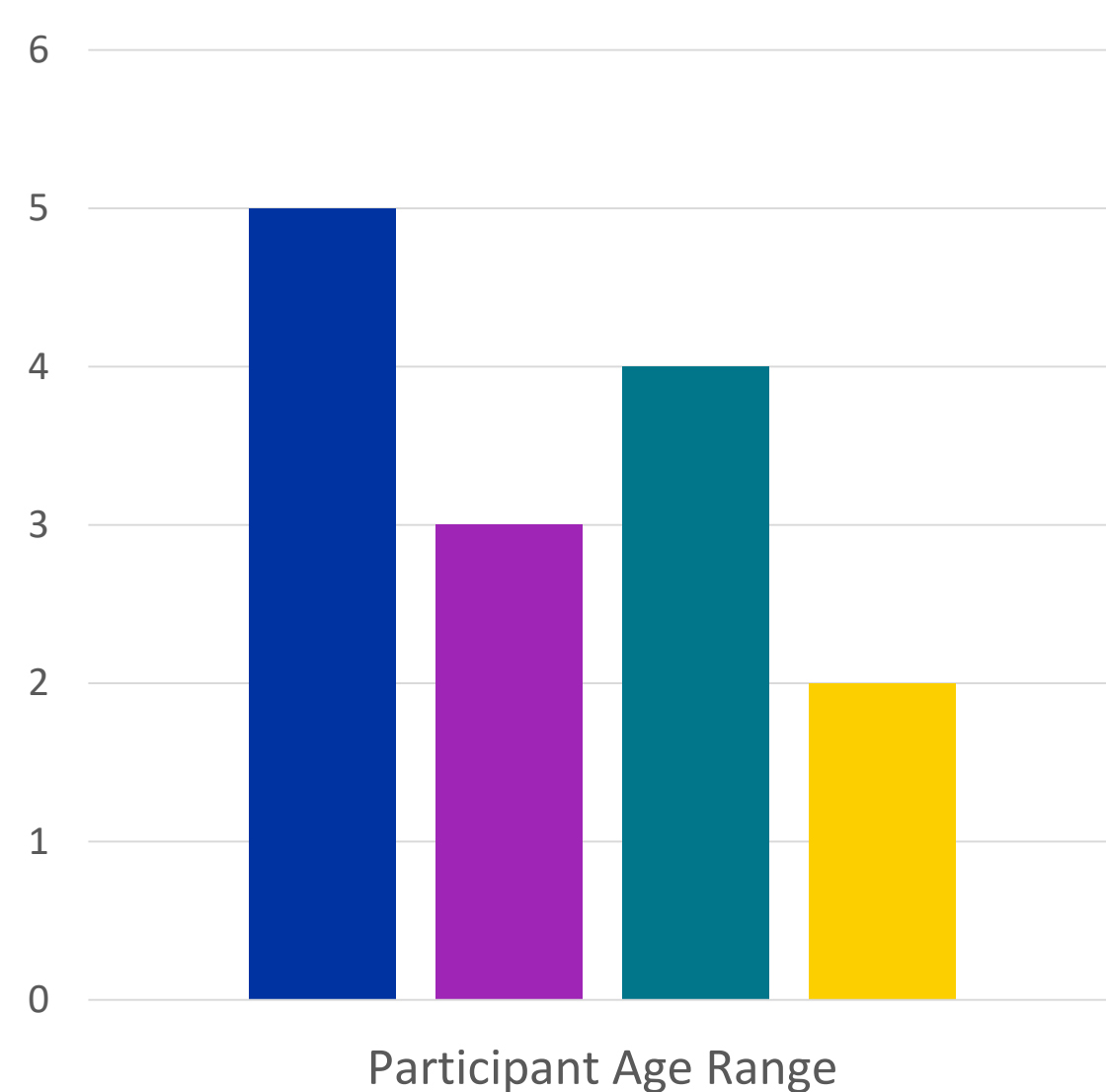
 **As expected for a study this size, no participants were recommended to see their GP. A larger study is required to identify participants with unknown health conditions**

 **100% of survey respondents are 'Very Likely' to recommend Lifelight to friends and family across all ages of the participants from 22 to 87**

Project Adaptations

During the 5 month implementation, the following changes to the project were made:

- A Lifelight reading requires a patient to be still and in as much light as possible. The reception area proved to be unsuitable, so readings took place in a well-lit upstairs office
- It was envisaged the iPad would stay on site but the SmileKind team took the iPad to other practices, utilising the benefit of the technology being portable



Lessons Learned

- Much time was spent preparing for ethical approval. However, the ethics process for dentistry is not the same as general practice and a review was not required
- It was tempting to include more dental sites, but it was easier to manage in one place to begin with. Future roll out could mean using Lifelight in multiple dental environments at once
- Older people aren't as anti-technology as generally assumed!

Conclusions

The positive response to Lifelight indicates the technology's potential impact is apparent and considered important by the participants. A longer study is required to increase the possibility of finding participants with underlying health conditions and what happens as a result of their Lifelight reading. The next step is to evaluate what the SmileKind team thought of the adoption and what could be done differently to improve the experience and make it sustainable.