


Educating Rural Caregivers with Mobile Technology

Kathy Jo Ellison, DSN, RN
Emily Myers, MSW

Presented at the



Presenter Disclosures

Kathy Jo Ellison and Emily Myers

(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose

Acknowledgements


Team:

- o Kathy Jo Ellison, DSN, RN
- o Jatunn Gibson, MPH
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Problem




- Aging of the population and the increase in the number of chronically ill persons
- Over 43.5 million people nationwide provide informal care for a chronically ill elder family member delivering more than 75% of their care (AARP).
- Rural caregivers face additional challenges due to fewer transportation options, limited access to medical professionals, lower incomes, and fewer support systems.

Background

- The negative effects of long-term caregiving have resulted in the need for more effective evidence-based programs to improve caregiver outcomes.
- There has been limited attention to improving mechanisms to getting caregiver education into the rural areas and to the care recipients in greatest need of additional support.
- Previous research by the current team (2010) found workshops do not reach the neediest caregivers and recommended additional strategies be developed.

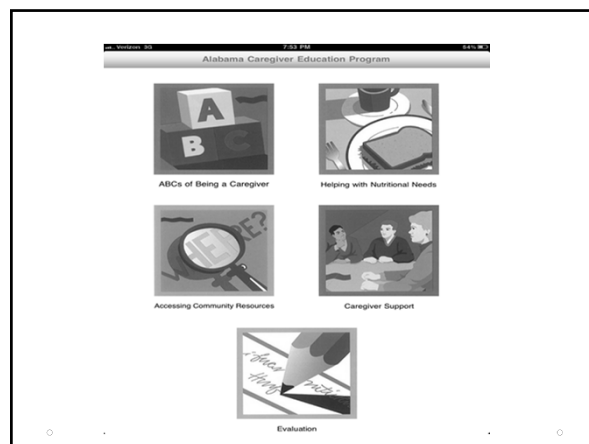
Purpose

The purpose of this University/ Community collaborative project was to develop and evaluate a caregiver education program implemented via an iPad application.



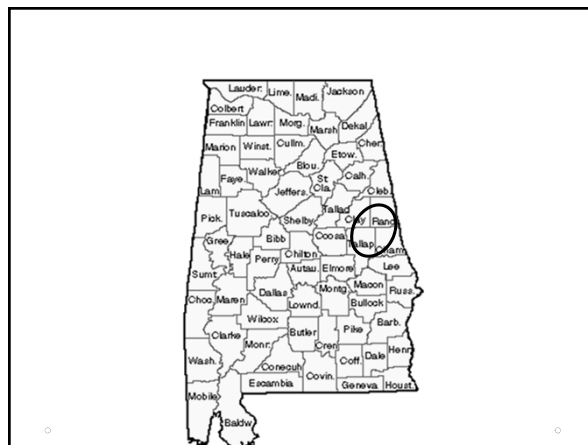
Program

- A caregiving curriculum for the iPad was developed based on the Alabama Home Caregiver Curriculum.
- This curriculum had been developed by a team of Extension professionals, Auburn University School of Nursing faculty, Social Work and Nutrition faculty and other allied health practitioners.
- The educational components chosen for the iPad application were Meeting Personal and Health Care Needs, Nutritional Care, Accessing Community Resources, and Stress and Time Management.



Pilot project

- Training was held with rural home health care agencies and extension partners in a 2 county region regarding use of the iPad and evaluation of the program.
- Over 50 rural caregivers from two counties in the state were provided 2-3 day access to the iPad and a printer where they could print the resources they wished to retain.
- Caregivers were then invited to participate in a formal evaluation of the program.



Pilot evaluation

38 caregivers completed questionnaires post education including:

- demographics
- changes in their caregiving knowledge and skills
- reactions to using the iPad program.

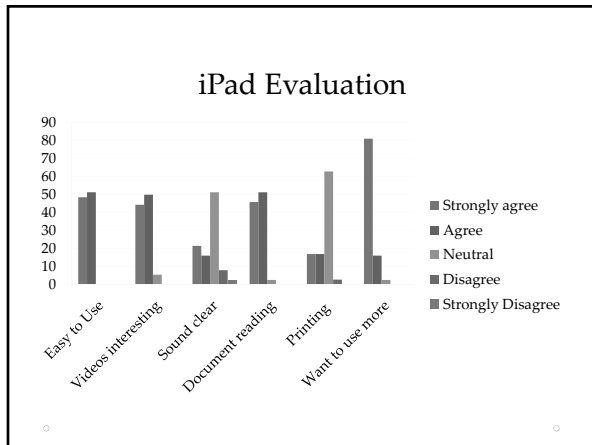
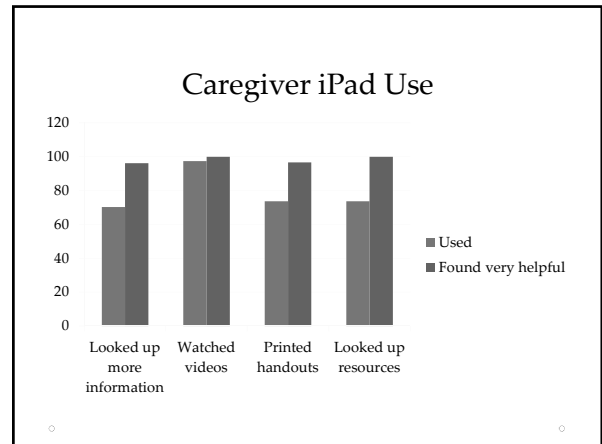
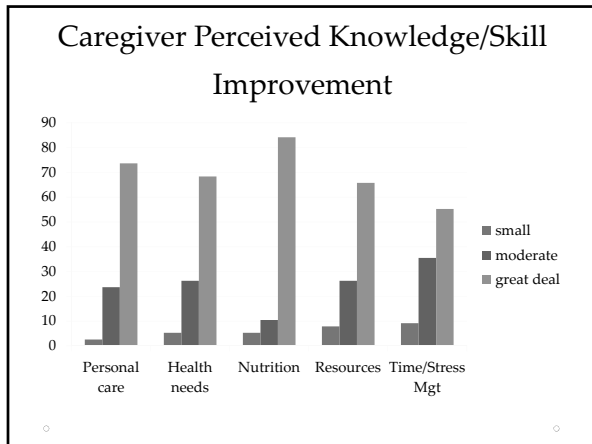
Description of Participants (n=38)

Caregiver

- 84.2% female
- Mean age 55.8 (SD 13.3)
- 68.4% married
- 62.2% Black, 37.8% White
- 50% high school, 37% at least some college, 13% some graduate school
- 65% employed
- 54.5% provide care in care receivers home, 41% in caregiver or shared home

Care Receiver

- 52.4% female
- Median age 72 Range 27-100
- Relationship of caregiver to receiver: spouse 31.8%, child/grandchild 22.7%, parent 13.6%, sibling 13.6%, Friend 9.1%, paid 4.5%
- Hours of care per day median 5.5 Range 4-24
- Diagnoses: Dementia, CV Disease, Cancer, General disability, Diabetes/Orthopedic



Conclusions

- An iPad program increased access of rural caregivers to supportive resources and appears to be an effective method of providing information and skill building to caregivers.
- Caregivers reported a moderate to great deal of improvement in the caregiving knowledge and skill areas covered in the program.
- iPad use was evaluated very favorably even by elderly caregivers with the exception of some difficulties in sound and printing.

Future Directions

- Increased development and use of mobile technology to improve access to education in vulnerable rural caregivers
- Use of Cloud technology