

# Want vs need: Why Hearing Providers Choose Connected Hearing Services

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# Objectives of this session

1. To recognise different kinds of connected hearing health services
2. To explore the reasons why hearing clinicians and other staff choose to use or reject connected hearing services

# What are connected health services?

*Telehealth: “use of telecommunication techniques for the purpose of providing telemedicine, medical education, and health education over a distance” – ISO*

Any health services where client and clinician are not co-located



# Connected hearing health in Australia

Various connected hearing services used in Australia

- Commonly used for screening (e.g. Telscreen II)
- Hearing aid-based remote apps
- Webchat for information and maintenance enquiries
- Entirely remote rehabilitation services
- Some use where access is limited (e.g. remote Aboriginal communities)

However, connected hearing services have not been widely adopted in most places



# Connected hearing health supports clients

Strong evidence that connected hearing health services can:

- Facilitate client-clinician communication (Ng et al., 2017)
- Improve self-management (Maidment et al., 2019)
- Enhance client empowerment (Ferguson, 2019)

So why is usage generally low?



# Our study

“What are the factors that go into whether staff choose to use or not use connected hearing services?”

Survey of 132 staff at Hearing Australia:

- Asked about three different connected hearing health services
- “Does your centre deliver [service]?”
- “What currently works well or would help your centre to use [service]?”
- “What does not work so well or stops your centre from using [service]?”

Responses were collated and analysed using thematic analysis



# What staff need to know

- Training – “Do I have the skills to use this service?”
- Staffing – “Are there enough people with the right skills around me?”
- Time – “Do I have enough time to be able to use this service?”
- Technology – “Does the technology work effectively?”
- Usability – “Does the service work easily for me and for my client?”
- The Right Client – “Will my client be able to benefit from this service?”
- Clear Benefits – “Do I believe that this service will help my client?”



# Findings

- Connected hearing services seen as an alternative to traditional services
- Same kinds of problems arose in different kinds of connected hearing service
- The younger an intervention was, the more and more varied issues were reported
- Many staff felt that most clients were not suitable for telehealth
  - However, ~80% of adults over 65 own a smartphone (Deloitte, 2018)
- Many staff did not feel that clients “needed” the service

*“Hasn’t been needed”*

*“No clinical need”*

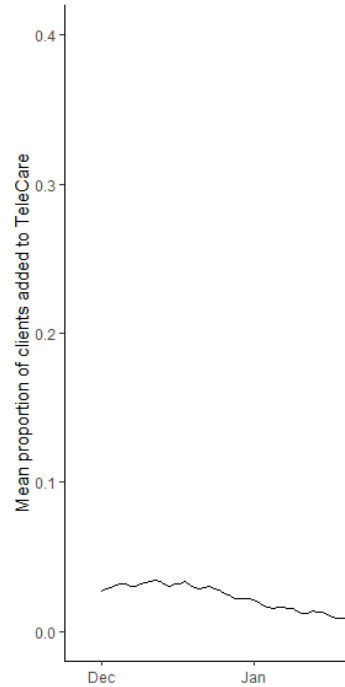
*“Insufficient demand in this area”*





# Changes due to COVID-19

- Increased focus on contactless delivery to reduce infection risk
- Temporary regulatory changes to facilitate contactless delivery
- Demonstrated need leads to change!



# Opportunities

- Connected hearing health services can support clients and clinicians
- We know what needs to be addressed to support uptake – effective change management processes lead to successful implementation
- COVID-19 represents a significant opportunity to establish connected hearing services as a part of ongoing service delivery – both end-to-end and hybrid models

# Thanks to...

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Jermy Pang



Paul Jevelle



# Q&A

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