

Title: Elderly can use Touch-Screen to Improve Speed and Quality of Patient Surveys in Clinical Trials

Investigators: HealthAmerica of PA, Inc. and University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy, Kjel A. Johnson, PharmD*, Debora Partsch, PharmD

Introduction: Clinical research involving quality of life surveys is complicated by: 1) physical limitation in older patients, and 2) data entry errors when data is transcribed. To determine if touch-screen technology is acceptable to older patients, who are in a clinical study, we evaluated such a tool in patients with coronary artery disease (CAD) enrolled into a study to determine the effects of a disease management program on their quality of life (QoL) and resource consumption.

Methods: Patients who reported “chest pain from heart disease in the past three months” were offered informed consent after meeting other inclusion/exclusion criteria. A medical history, physical, and laboratory data were collected from each subject, and survey data (QoL, satisfaction and demographics) were collected via touch-screen technology. These same data were again collected at a follow-up visit fourteen weeks later. The treatment group received a disease management program involving direct patient contact, non-pharmacologic and pharmacologic therapy, and phone calls every two weeks, whereas the control group were followed as usual care. Patients were asked the following questions to assess their satisfaction with touch-screen technology: 1. “How did you feel about using a computer?”, 2. “How did you feel about the questions we asked you?”, and 3. “How did you feel about taking time to answer these questions?”.

Results: At the present time, 209 and 191 subjects have been enrolled into the treatment and control groups, respectively. One hundred thirty-eight and 130 subjects have completed the fourteen week follow-up. Mean age was 65 years. 73% of patients liked using a computer “very much”, only 4% felt the questions asked were inappropriate, and 59% liked taking the time to answer questions “very much”.

Conclusions: Patients found touch-screen technology easy to use, and were satisfied with this method of data collection.