

Facilitating Patient Adoption of and Feature Utilization within the Electronic Patient Portal in an Ambulatory Family Medicine Clinic

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Introduction

- Technology and medicine are increasingly becoming interwoven. Recent world events have precipitated and facilitated the adoption of alternative, technological advances in providing medical care.
- One arm of this integration is the adoption and implementation of electronic patient portals. Electronic patient portals have emerged as a recognized strategy to facilitate the delivery of medical care.
- As research has grown in this area, best practice guidelines and accepted optimal strategies appear to be lagging. It is not clear how these portals are being used by patients and which patients are engaged with the system.
- The objective of this study was to explore the adoption, utilization, and usefulness of a patient portal in an outpatient Family Medicine clinic to improve access, patient engagement, and patient satisfaction.

Materials & Methods

- Design: cross-sectional prospective clinical research study
- Facility: Ascension Providence Medical Center South Lyon, an outpatient Family Medicine residency clinic.
- A questionnaire regarding patient demographics, insurance type, number of devices owned, and portal usage was administered to patients during scheduled office visits.
- Twenty-nine patients participated in the study (n=29).
- Responders were primarily Caucasian females aged 40-64 years old.
- Chi-square analysis was used to identify patient factors associated with portal utilization.

References

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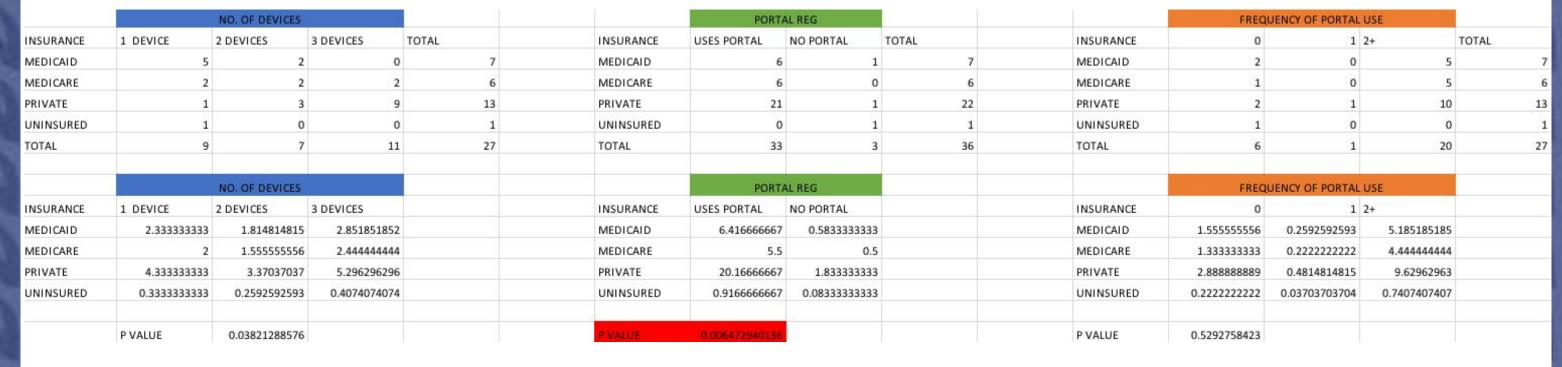


Table 3. Insurance: Number of devices owned; Portal Registration; Frequency of Portal Usage

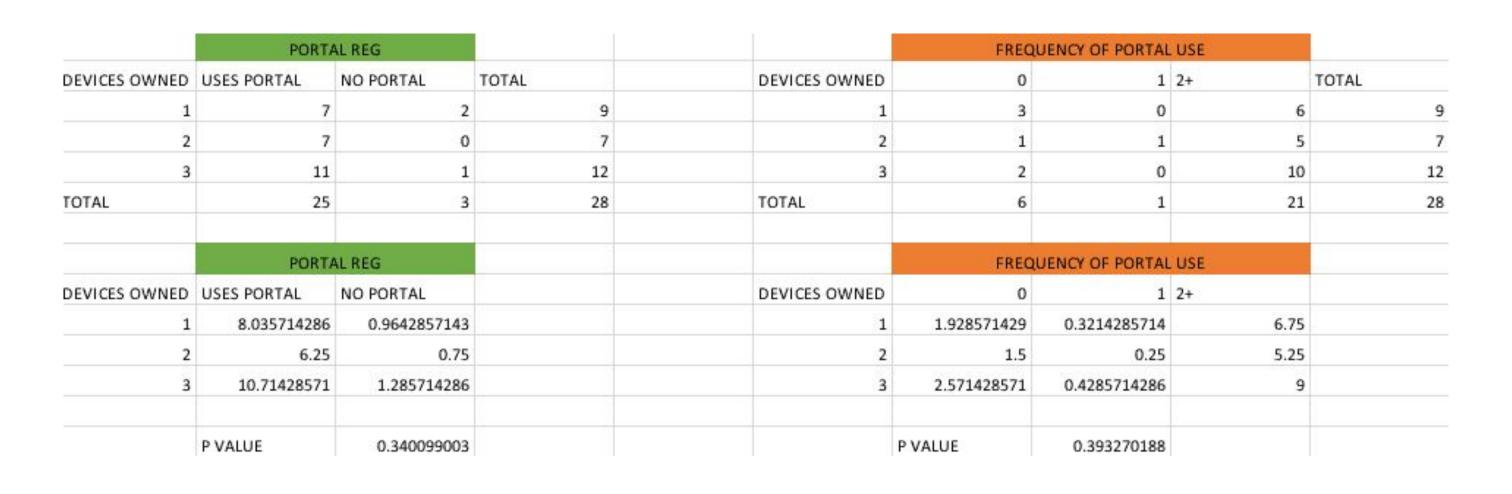


Table 4. Number of devices owned: Portal Registration and Frequency of Portal Usage

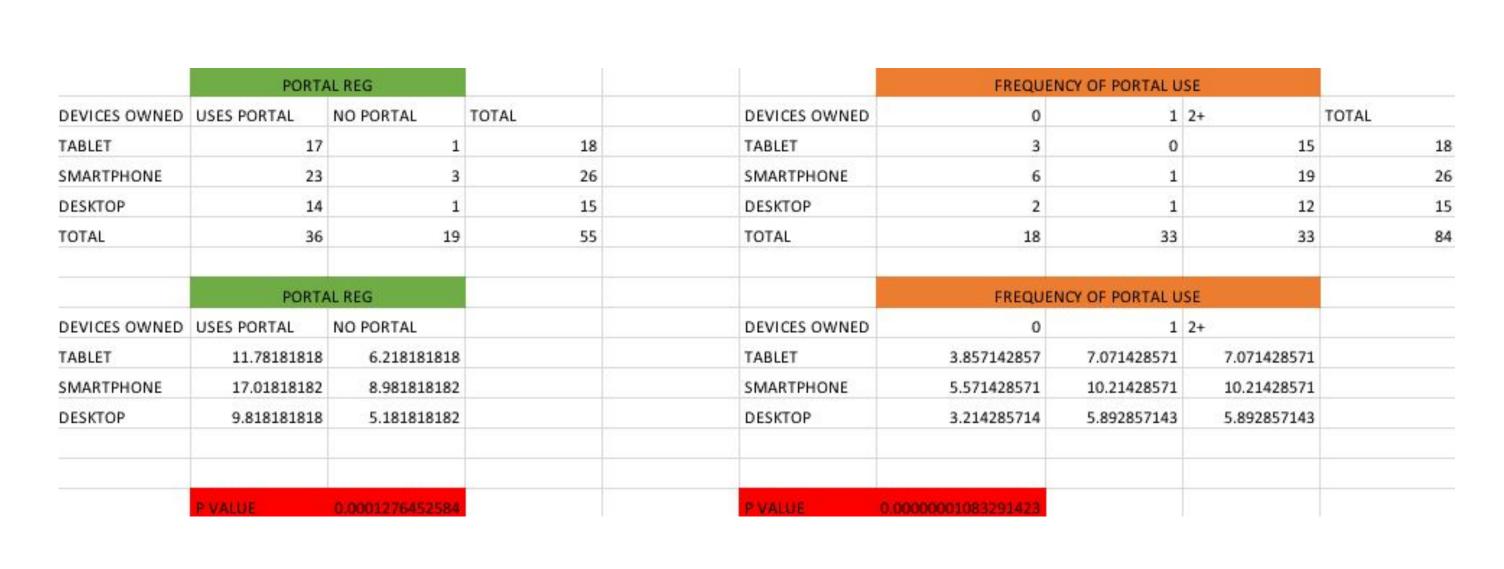


Table 5. Device Type owned: Portal Registration and Frequency of Portal Usage

Results (contd.)

- Results of chi-square analyses revealed statistical significance between the variables of:
 - Portal Registration and Type of Insurance (Table. 3)
 - (p = 0.006)
 - Portal Registration and Type of Device owned (**Table. 5**)
 - (p < 0.05)
 - Frequency of Portal Usage and Type of Device owned (**Table. 5**)
 - (p < 0.05)

Conclusions

- Results indicated that portal registration and usage were higher in patients with private insurance and type of device owned.
- Overall ease of use and user interface drove dissatisfaction scores.
- These results highlight the importance of broadening the scope of portal access to those who are un- or underinsured and those who may not have reliable technology resources.
- Understanding the factors that underlie such variability was beyond the scope of this study.

Future Directions

- Future work on identifying barriers to portal usage.
- Employing EHR data repository.
- Controlling for concomitant conditions and engagement.
- Further elucidation into feature utilization.
- Pilot program introducing alteration to the portal to address areas of identified needed improvement.