



“People are Struggling in this Area”: Formative Audience Research to Develop a Telemedicine Intervention



PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to better understand the values, needs, and opinions of target audience on health, health care access, and contraception in order to develop a telemedicine intervention to address health disparities in rural communities, specifically for reproductive health care.

RESULTS

Themes and Subthemes with Descriptive quotes

Confidentiality

Seeing someone you know

“Definitely confidentiality because in a lot of the cases, in a small town like this, everybody knows everybody”

“I can see in a community this size that maybe it would be a little off-putting just because you do see people you know all the time”

Privacy

“Privacy. Because of the fact you’re going to a community center, you don’t have offices where you can sit and see a doctor or talk”

“The lack of privacy...when you go to a doctor’s office, it’s more private”

Telemedicine as Beneficial

Transportation

“The closer the better, especially from where we live, gas and transportation is always an issue. So having some place closer would be great”

Wait time at other facilities

“...with Medicaid and make an appointment they get booked up quick, but you could just go to the center”

Financial Issues

“And what it does is you don’t have to pay all that money versus going into a doctor’s office. You save on gas and all that...”

Telemedicine

Physician Credibility

“I would think that if you at least know who the doctor is, what their degree is in, where it’s from, how long they’ve been practicing...You would hope that whoever you’re talking to is obviously a legitimate person”

“As long as the staff is qualified, medical wise. Qualified staff is really what you look for”

Doctor-patient Communication

“Just doctors that are really down-to-earth and can communicate with their patients. I don’t want to feel judged regardless of why I go to a doctor’s office”

Relationship-centered Care

“Maybe the person, the doctor that they’re talking to doesn’t know them on a personal level, so they might not feel as comfortable asking questions, or the doctor might not know their specific scenario or situation so that might be a problem”

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of Participants

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Age	Mean with range	32.4 ± 7 years
Race	African American	29
	White or Caucasian	13
	Other	2
	Hispanic or Latina	1
Income	\$49,999 or less	38
	\$15,000 or less	12
	\$50,000 or more	7
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	46
	Other	1
Current Birth Control Method	None	20
	Sterilization	7
	Oral Contraceptive Pill	5
	Shot	3
	Condoms	3
	Implant	1
Form of Health Insurance	Private	19
	Medicaid	14
	None	6

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ABSTRACT

Rural communities face disparities and barriers to health care access that may be addressed through telemedicine. Researchers partnered with a women’s health organization to conduct formative audience research to develop a telemedicine intervention. Qualitative research improved understandings of the target audience’s values, needs, and opinions about health, health care access, and contraception. In-depth interviews with 52 women ages 18-44 were conducted in rural South Carolina. Analytical techniques from grounded theory methodology were used throughout data collection and analysis. Participants believed that a telemedicine intervention would benefit the community by addressing health barriers, such as cost and transportation. Participants’ main concerns included issues of privacy and confidentiality. Findings will be used to design and implement a telemedicine intervention to improve rural women’s health.

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METHODS

Recruited through printed flyers, e-mail messages, Facebook advertisement, and word of mouth

- Participants aged 18-44 years
- In-depth interviews using a semi-structured guide, lasting approximately one hour
- 52 completed interviews
- Investigated values, needs, and opinions on health, health care access, and contraception

Data Analysis

- Interviews were transcribed verbatim
- Grounded theory methodology was used to analyze the data, highlighting personal experience
- HyperRESEARCH 3.7.2 was utilized to code and analyze transcripts
- Constant comparative method was used to identify emerging themes from the data

IMPLICATIONS

Finding suggest a telemedicine intervention would be beneficial to women in rural communities, describing the service as convenient, accessible, and affordable.

Results indicate the program would address barriers to health care in rural communities, such as cost, transportation, and overcrowding of health care facilities.

Program design should consider audience’s concerns regarding confidentiality, privacy, as well as the importance of physician credibility, doctor-patient communication, and relationship building with telemedicine health care providers. The study’s findings will be used to design and implement a telemedicine intervention to address health disparities and improve rural women’s health.

CONCLUSIONS

- Audience’s opinion on utilizing telemedicine
 - Affordable method of receiving reproductive health care
 - More convenient for women to have a program within their community to reduce transportation barriers
 - Aid in avoiding long waits at other health care facilities
- Audience’s concerns about telemedicine services
 - Confidentiality of seeing someone they know while utilizing the service
 - Privacy within the facility and with personal medical records
 - Credibility of doctor administering the services
 - Receiving effective doctor to patient communication
- Audience’s attitudes concerning contraception
 - Doctor as most trusted source of information, emphasizing need for education regarding birth control as part of a healthy lifestyle
 - Concerns with effectiveness and side-effects associated with various forms of birth control
 - Emphasis on family discussions regarding birth control decisions

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