Chapter 71

What E-Mental Health Can Offer to Saudi Arabia Using an Example of Australian E-Mental Health

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ABSTRACT

Mental health have become a very influential topic around the world due to the increase of mental health issues that have been reported through national research and surveys. Many studies have been done along the years around the barriers in regards to seeking help in deferent countries and communities. This research aims to look closely into these barriers targeting issues and potential solutions, specifically for Saudi Arabia. Recently, the use of e-mental health services have proven to be an effective method to improve is barriers to mental health treatment. However, this chapter addresses the application and suitably of e-mental health programs for Saudi Arabia mental health services. To do so, a case study of Australian e-mental health services was selected to assist with the investigations.

INTRODUCTION

E-mental health is defined as providing treatment and/or support to people with different mental disorders through sensible technologies (Anthony et al., 2010; Christensen and Petrie, 2013b; Whittaker et al., 2012; e-Mental Health Alliance, 2014). E-mental health services have the ability to improve accessibility, reduce cost, provide flexibility, and better consumer interactivity and engagement (Lal and Adair, 2014). A number of the sensible technologies that are used in the delivery of e-mental health are

as follow: Short Message Service (SMS); Email; Website/apps; Shat or instant messaging (IM) tools; Social Media; Video/Audio via the Internet; Or Smart phones.

E-mental health services have the ability to overcome issues in the current mental health sector. These services have the ability to improve lack of access due to location, time or financial difficulties or poor mental health literacy (Booth et al., 2004). It also can reduce the load on mental health clinics which will improve the therapists' time efficacy and allow the service to be available for people who need higher level of medical attentions (Jorm et al., 2013; Jorm et al., 2007). However, there are a number of concerns found in the literature. These include lack of quality control; limited only for people with low to moderate mental illnesses; limited to people who are familiar with using technology (Lal & Adair, 2014)

The capability of e-mental can assist developed and developing countries to successfully deal with challenges that are currently exist in their mental health services. This by enabling early intervention and treatment, better promotion methods for various of people with different mental issues (Reavy, Hobbs, Hereford, & Crosby, 2012).

E-mental health is a useful tool to get information, treatments and support anonymously in most programs, which might help people avoiding the feelings of stigma. E-mental health also will help people who live in low population or rural areas, where access to mental health providers may be limited (Christensen & Hickie, 2010).

There is recognition globally that there are challenges to the current accessibility of mental health services. This includes stigma, location, service availability and geographic location (Lal and Adair, 2014; e-Mental Health Alliance, 2014; Gulliver et al., 2010). Besides these challenges, the Saudi Arabia has other challenges, which also found in some Muslim countries, that impact its mental health services accessibility, such as, religious healing (Koenig & Al Shohaib, 2014), gender versions (Al-Saggaf, 2004; Al-Shahri, 2002) and women's legal and social aspects (Saleh, 2014). These aspects are some of the factors that have been found that may impact mental health services delivery in a different way from the case (Australia) (Al-Saggaf, 2004; Koenig et al., 2014; Al-Shahri, 2002; Koenig and Al Shohaib, 2014; Saleh, 2014).

This study is investigating the capability of e-mental health services to facilitate the current mental health sector of Saudi Arabia. This will be by pointing out the potential of e-mental health to deal with challenges that affect the mental health services in Saudi Arabia. To do so, a case study of Australian e-mental health services was selected to assist with the investigations. Due to some of the main issues facing Saudi consumers such as: Mental health service provision, policies and legislations in Saudi Arabia, cultural barriers, stigma and religious healing and gender variation impact and women's legal and social aspects, e-mental health programs will be a productive solution for the mental health sector in Saudi Arabia. E-mental health services indicate significant outcomes to improve the barriers that affect traditional mental health services, as what will be discussed through examples of Australian e-mental health program.

BACKGROUND

Mental Health Service Provision, Policies, and Legislations in Saudi Arabia

Recently, the mental health sector has started to gain attention from Saudi authorities (Binhadyan, Troshani, & Wickramasinghe, 2014). In 2006, the national mental health policy was developed and spe-

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