

Patient forms: A case study on enhancing patient experience in the waiting room

The adoption of patient forms via tablets within primary care settings allows patients to complete health-related assessments while waiting to see their healthcare provider, facilitating a positive distraction from waiting and enhancing the patient experience. In addition, it allows patients more time for reflection while they answer the assessment questions, supporting a more comprehensive and accurate feedback from patient to clinician.

In healthcare, evidence shows that patient experience is influenced by time spent waiting in the waiting room for provider care, which impacts both the patients' confidence in their care provider and perceived quality of care.¹ Multiple studies across industries show how digital initiatives can influence people's perceived wait times and increase their wait area enjoyment.² With a provincial focus on patient experience,³ the use of digital devices such as tablets provides an opportunity to not only efficiently collect health-related information from patients while they wait to see the healthcare provider, but can also enhance their experience while waiting.

In partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) of Waterloo Wellington, the eHealth Centre of Excellence has provided tablets to 13 clinics to facilitate mental health assessments and other healthcare assessments while the patient waits for their healthcare appointment.



Feedback from patients using the tablets

“Helped get my thoughts in order.”

“It helps to speed things up for myself and my doctor.”

“I find it easier to organize my thoughts if I have time to write.”

“Simple and easy to use.”

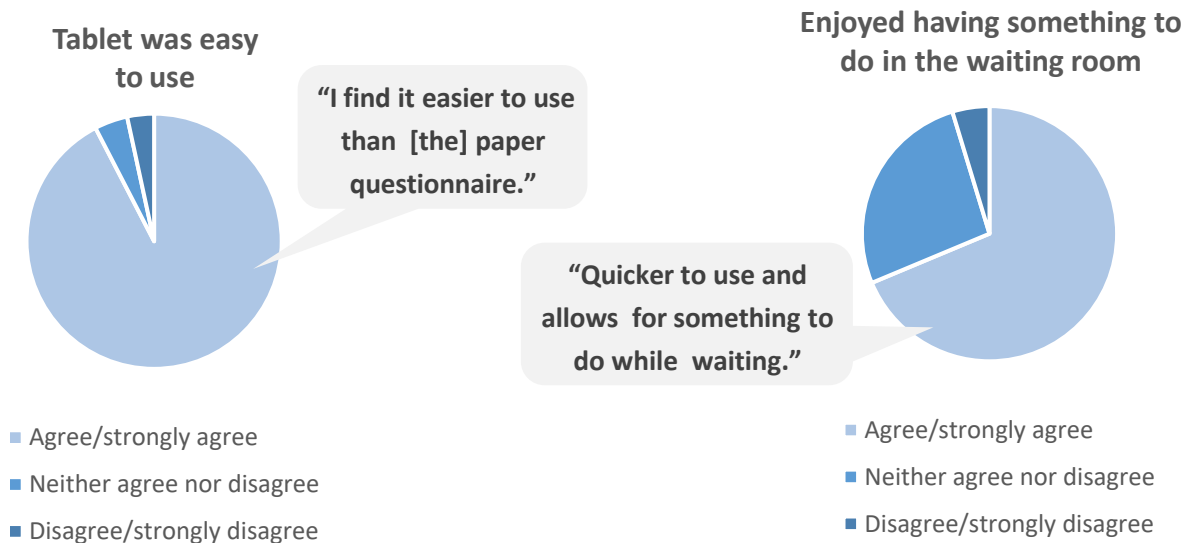
“It was good to actually think about how I felt about some of the questions.”

“Excellent use of technology.”

A study conducted at the Guelph Family Health Team confirmed that significantly more patients report the length of time in the reception as excellent or very good (62.7% pre to 72.0% post $p < 0.05$) since tablets implementation, even though the wait time did not change (24 minutes' pre- to 23 minutes' post-tablet implementation).

In other words, patients perceived the wait time as shorter compared to waiting without tablet use. Patient feedback from the 13 different clinics ($n=1,907$) that adopted tablets illustrated that:

- 92% of patients thought that the tablets were easy to use
- 69% of patients enjoyed having something to do while waiting
- patients aged 29 and younger were more likely to prefer the tablet for mental health assessments compared to patients aged 60 and over who were more likely to prefer a face-to-face interaction when being assessed



As a result, tablets can help to enhance patient experience by providing the patient with options to complete assessments on tablets while waiting.

If you have any questions or would like further information on this case study, contact communications@ehealthce.ca.

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Works Cited:

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