Mental Health Chatbots for People With Chronic Health Conditions

Why is this project important?

- People with chronic health conditions often have higher levels of depression and anxiety than individuals living without chronic conditions.
- Mental health chatbots may be an accessible, cost-effective way to provide mental health support to people with chronic health conditions.
- Research has shown that mental health chatbots can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in nonclinical samples, but their effectiveness has not been tested in people with chronic health conditions.

What are we doing?

- This study evaluated the usefulness of a mental health chatbot for people with chronic health conditions.
- We focused on two chronic health conditions that are known to negatively impact mental health: arthritis and diabetes.
- Half of the study participants used a mental health chatbot for 4 weeks (*chatbot group*). The remaining participants received no chatbot (*control group*).
- People in the chatbot group reported declines in depression and anxiety; no changes were found in the control group.
- People in the chatbot group enjoyed the design of the chatbot and the user experience, but they said that the conversational abilities of the chatbot could use improvement.

How will this help?

- The results of this study suggest that mental health chatbots may be a useful tool for improving mental health among people with chronic health conditions.
- Mental health chatbots could be particularly beneficial for individuals who face financial, geographical, or other barriers to conventional mental health services.
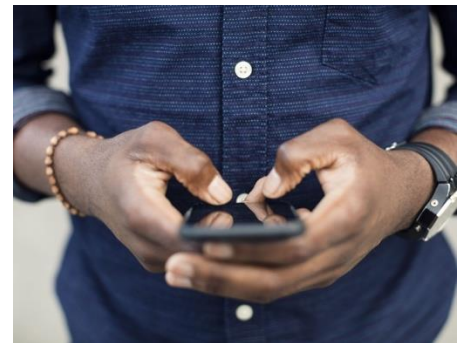
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