2-Heal: The development of a mental health application for Malaysian young people

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: Mental health promotion and prevention of mental illness should be integrated into broader efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, Goal 3 to help mitigate the incidence and prevalence of the disorder. Adolescence is a critical time for physical, cognitive, and social development. It also marks a period in which there is a steep increase in the prevalence of mental health difficulties. This highlights the need for mental health apps that have the potential to reach young people who would otherwise not receive help by removing the barriers to treatment. The aim of this study is to develop a mental health self-screening tool for a mobile app and to assess the app 's usefulness. Methods: 2-Heal is a smartphone-based app for dealing with the mental health issues of people. It is developed through the partnership efforts of researchers from various disciplines such as public health, psychology, and computer science from the University of Malaya. This app enables the screening of the users ' emotional states, including depression, anxiety, and stress and provides psychoeducation and activities for improving their mental wellbeing. The app 's screening component was developed based on a causal structure related to risks and protective factors surrounding the mental health of Malaysian youth. This structure was established on the grounds of a qualitative study, which included interviewing 28 youths aged between 15 and 22 years from the urban areas of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor and a systematic review of the literature on mental health screening tools. Using Google Forms, the screening tool was administered to 154 youths. The scale reliability was examined using Cronbach 's alpha coefficient. The usefulness of this app was subsequently evaluated among Malaysian users. Results: It was found that the app 's internal reliabilities for depression, anxiety, and stress were 0.82, 0.90, and 0.92, respectively. It was also observed that the app was accessible, and the screening questions were easy to understand by the users. In addition, most users were of the view that the app was helpful in managing their emotions. Discussion: The tough challenges faced by adolescents demand the development of an innovative solution to address the surge in mental health problems. The results of this study demonstrate that 2-Heal has the potential to assist in the mental health services for adolescents and improve their mental health literacy.

KEYWORDS: