

Improvements and Upgrades to the Electronic Preventive Services Selector

Principal Investigator:	McCormack, Lauren
Organization:	Research Triangle Institute
Contract Number:	290-09-00021I
Project Period:	March 2010 – March 2012
AHRQ Funding Amount:	\$479,032
Summary Status as of:	December 2010

Target Population: General

Summary: In October 2006, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality introduced the Electronic Preventive Services Selector (ePSS), an interactive tool that provides real-time decision support for clinicians as they select the proper preventive services for their patients. The software cross-references patient characteristics including age, sex, and selected behavioral risk factors against 110 U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendations covering 59 preventive services topics. The search results rendered at the point-of-care provide a summary of individual patient-specific recommendations, including screening tests, counseling topics, and information on preventive medications. The ePSS was launched initially for use as a Web-based resource available for download to mobile devices using the Palm and Windows Mobile computing platforms. In response to the prevalence of handheld devices in clinical care, subsequent updates to the tool made ePSS available for BlackBerry devices, iPods, and iPhones.

This project will refine and expand the content and functionalities of the ePSS tool. It provides an opportunity to improve the critical content of the system, particularly in helping providers better engage their patients in discussions of preference-sensitive recommendations and in developing tools and resources requested by health care providers.

A range of formative research methodologies are being used. These include interviews with clinicians, ethnographic observation of clinicians using the tool with patients, and a user survey on facilitators and barriers to ePSS tool use in clinical settings, as well as users' enhancement preferences. Content will be assessed in light of two objectives: 1) ability to enhance clinicians' communication with patients about USPSTF recommendations; and 2) ability to increase clinicians' awareness, understanding, and consideration of USPSTF recommendations. Subsequent phases of the project will include development of a strategy for integrating the updated content into the ePSS to ensure a seamless and functional product.

Project Objectives:

- Identify and engage a technical expert panel to provide feedback in the research design, findings from the analysis, and final recommendations. **(Ongoing)**
- Conduct formative research with tool users to understand barrier and facilitators to use as well as preferences for enhancements. **(Achieved)**
- Identify, develop, and prioritize a subset of recommendations for new ePSS content. **(Upcoming)**

2010 Activities: Because the project kicked off in March 2010, the focus of activity was on project initiation, finalizing the timeline and work plan, identifying and engaging with the technical expert panel (TEP), developing the formative research plan and tools, and beginning to identify and confirm the participants in the interview and observation process. A total of nine people, including physicians and other clinicians, health researchers, and a computer interface expert, were invited to participate in the TEP. The first TEP call was conducted in August 2010, during which members provided feedback on the research plan and how the project team could increase the use of the ePSS system and integrate the USPSTF guidelines into practice. The feedback from the discussions with TEP members identified many valuable issues and concepts, some of which led to a slight shift in focus for the interview and observation process while maintaining the original scope and overall methodology of the project. Recruitment for the observational sites for the formative research resulted in the selection of nine participants; two in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, four in North Carolina, and three in Tennessee. Separately, key informant interviews were conducted at the end of 2010 to help gain a broader view of use of the ePSS system. Analysis from the observations and interviews will be completed in 2011.

Preliminary Impact and Findings: There are no findings to date.

Strategic Goal: Develop and disseminate health IT evidence and evidence-based tools to improve health care decisionmaking through the use of integrated data and knowledge management.

Business Goal: Knowledge Creation