

Navigating Patients with low digital health literacy and their engagement with technology

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Background

- Patients benefit from routine collection of electronic patient-reported outcomes (ePROs) to monitor and proactively manage symptoms.
 - ePROs are included in Enhancing the Oncology Model, the payment reform demonstration project from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid
 - University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and University of South Alabama (USA) are implementing ePROs within a remote symptom monitoring program
- Differences were observed in patient participation in ePROs at UAB and MCI
 - **Black or African American patients were more than 3x more likely to decline participation than White participants**
 - Patients living in more disadvantaged neighborhoods were less likely to adhere to surveys
- Our navigation teams expressed concerns regarding lack of training on **digital health literacy**.

Project Design/Methods

Phase I: Qualitative interviews with patients and community health workers on technology barriers

Phase II: Engage health systems (focus on navigation), community health workers, and community members in conversations about digital health literacy to raise awareness and improve ability to identify and support patient with low digital health literacy

Phase III: Evaluate impact of community conversations on:

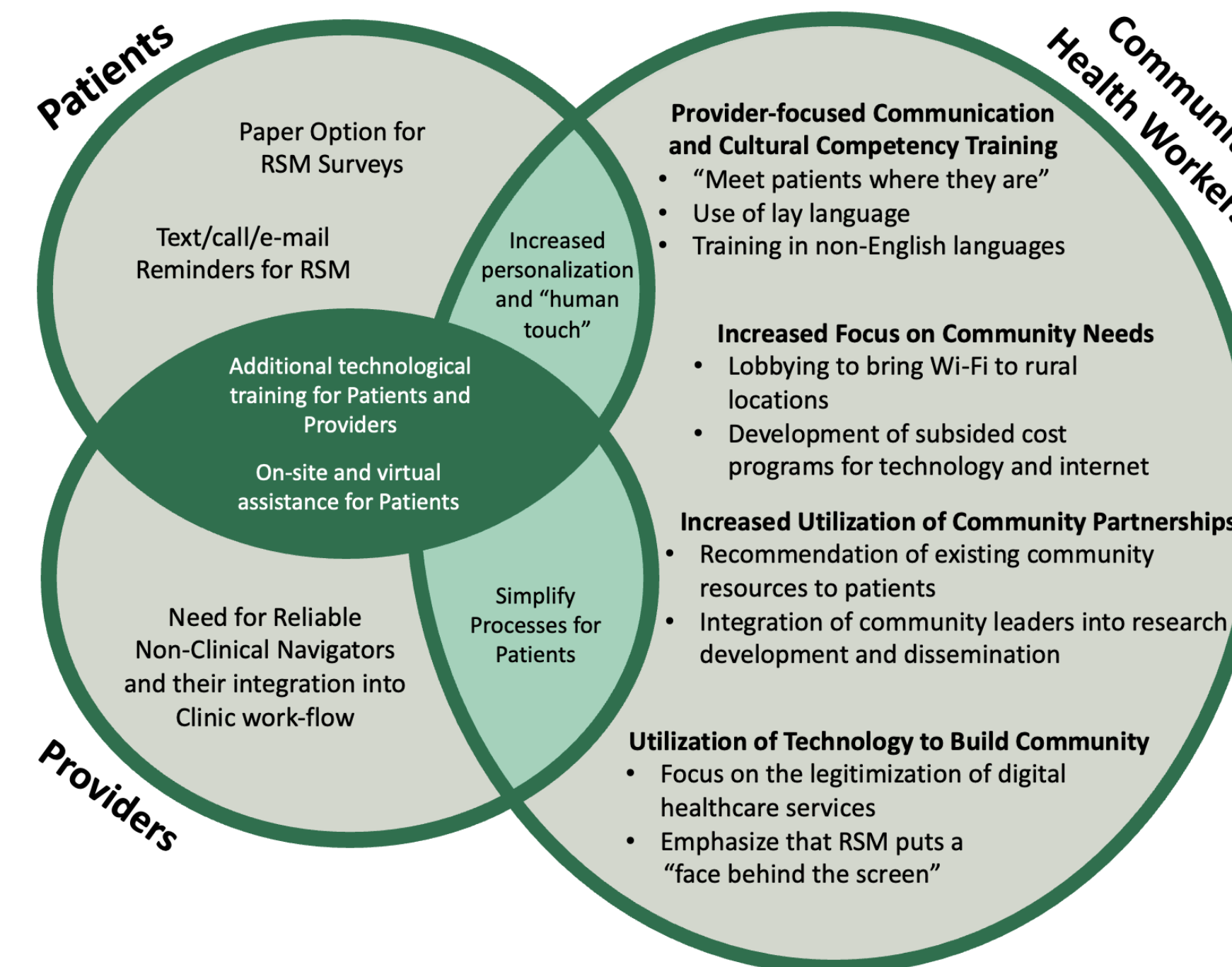
1. Participant knowledge about digital health literacy and comfort with supporting patient's use of technology
2. Engagement of populations of interest in remote symptom monitoring at UAB and USA.

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Interim Results

Phase I

Patients and community health workers highlighted strategies to address digital health literacy

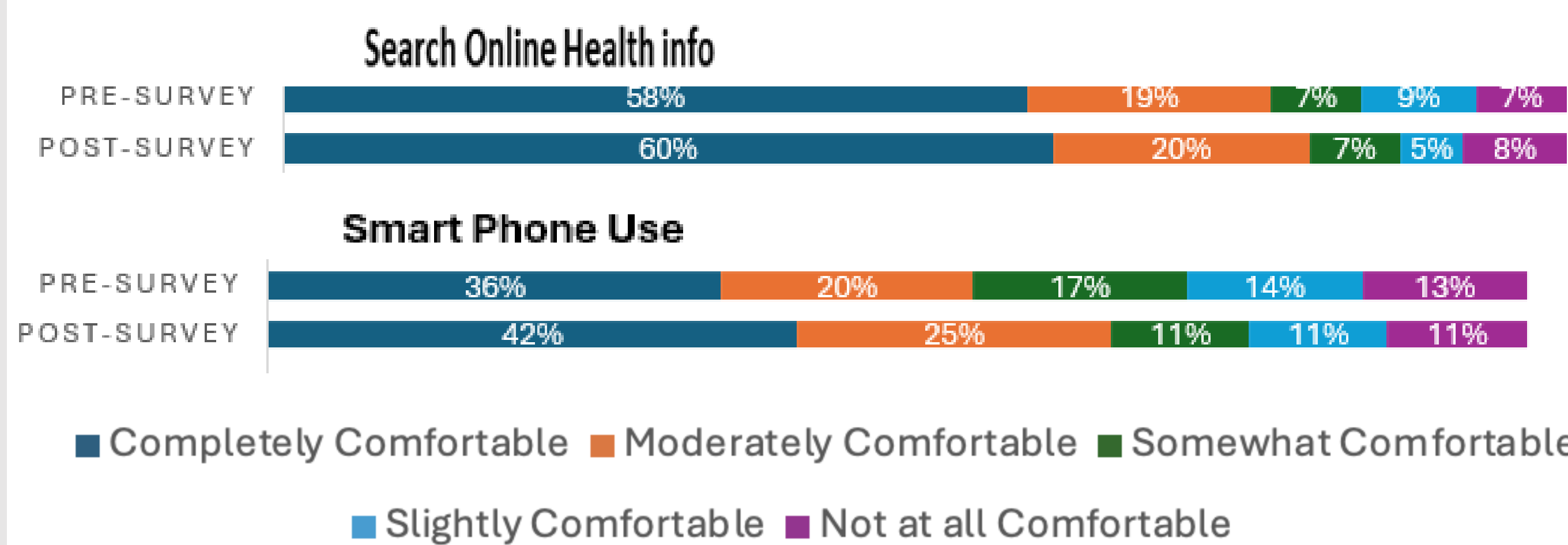


Phase II

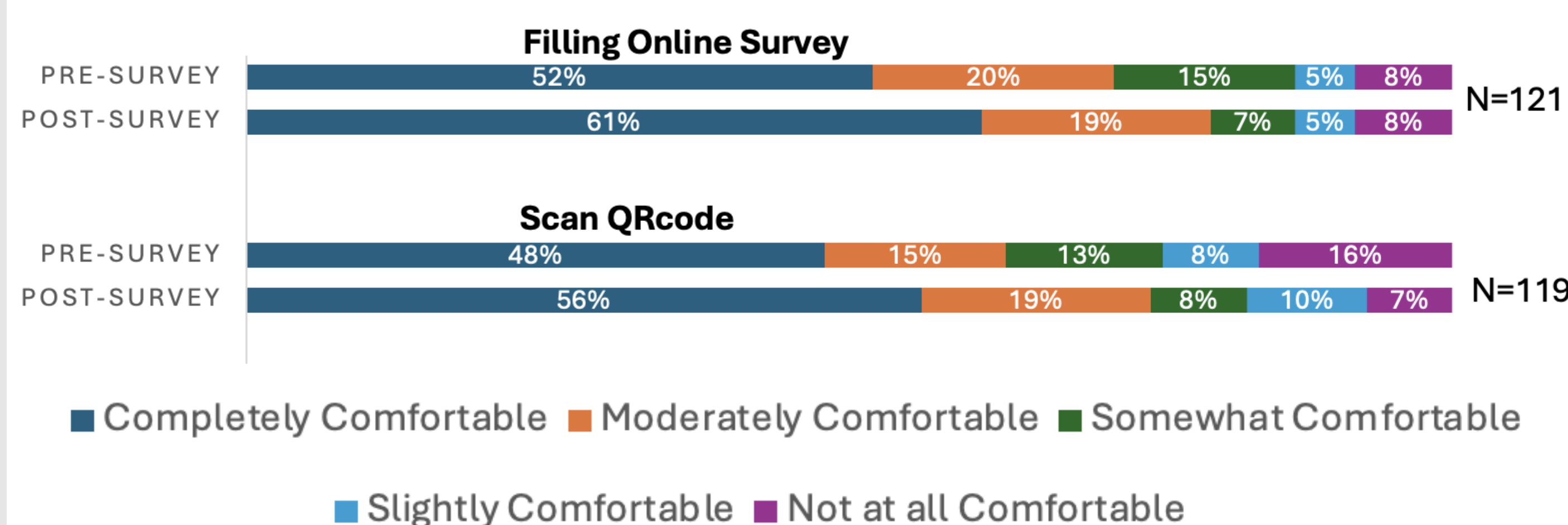
We have engaged 279 participants in 5 health system and 16 community conversations about digital health literacy

Phase III

Participants perceived low levels of comfort with technology in their communities. Participants are more comfortable using technology than teaching another person to use technology



Modest increases in comfort with personal use of technology and with teaching others technology skills observed after community conversations



Bar graph for sample of questions showing how comfortable participants are in teaching another person in the county to complete the listed task. N= Number of participants with responses in both pre-and post-survey

Innovation

- The engagement of community health workers and community partners (e.g. Cancer Awareness Network) to generate solutions to digital health literacy is novel
- The consideration of comfort at the level of the individual, ability to teach, and perceptions of community is a unique approach to evaluating impact of community conversations

Implications for Sustainable Practice

- **Impact:** This project is making a significant impact on the domains of engaged community and communication, planning and implementation.
- **Supporting Evidence:** Our survey data from 21 health system and community conversations suggests that digital health literacy challenges are common, education of communities and healthcare teams can begin to address these challenges and should be a part of navigation training.
- **Challenges:** Turnover from navigators is a challenge as new navigators will need training to identify and address digital health literacy. Also, baseline level of comfort with technology was lower than expected in the community and amongst the community health workers. Further funding is needed to support additional training in the community setting.
- **Addressing Challenges:** We plan to repeat the training in the next 6 months since new navigators have been hired. We also are exploring options to fund and to continue the community engagement and training around digital health literacy, given the substantial need for this within our community.

Next steps:

- Continuation of community conversations through April 2024 on how to identify patients with low digital health literacy and strategies to support patients with low digital health literacy
- Final data analysis beginning in Summer of 2024

