Reviewer’s report

Title: Considering patient safety in autonomous e-mental health systems - Detecting risk situations and referring patients back to human care

Version: 0 Date: 02 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Marlien Varnfield

Reviewer's report:

This paper describes patient safety in autonomous e-mental health systems in terms of detecting risk situations and referring patients back to human care.

The study set out with two objectives.

Firstly, to develop guidelines for risk detection and auto-referral systems.

Secondly, through crowd-sourcing, to investigate how persuasive techniques, mediated by a virtual agent, can facilitate self-referral.

The authors should be congratulated for undertaking such relevant and noteworthy work. Mental health is indeed an area in which staff shortages have been particularly acute in many countries and as mentioned by the authors, advances in technology create opportunities for computer systems to deliver health care interventions.

The research is important and the paper very well written. In my opinion the objectives set were met.

I have identified only minor grammatical errors:

P 20 ln 31 patients and providers may need to reach a mutual decisions about health interventions, including the choice: should read 'to reach a mutual decision' or 'to reach mutual decisions'

P 21 ln 12 "However, from the results we see that this suggestion was still effective in some cases, indicated that it did not fall into the latitude of rejection after all". Should this read "However, from the results we see that this suggestion was still effective in some cases, indicating that it did not fall into the latitude of rejection after all".

P 23 Reference 15. Spence J, Titov N, Johnston L, Jones MP, Dear BF. Internet-based trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy for PTSD with and WITHOUT? exposure components:

Limitations to the study are well described and covered and future research identified.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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