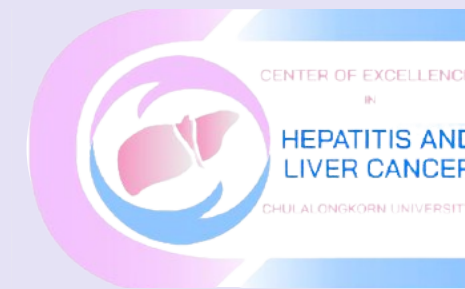# The Impact of Caregiver Support and Digital Familiarity on Elderly Patients' Satisfaction and Perception of Telemedicine.

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Center of Excellence in Hepatitis and Liver Cancer, Department of Biochemistry,
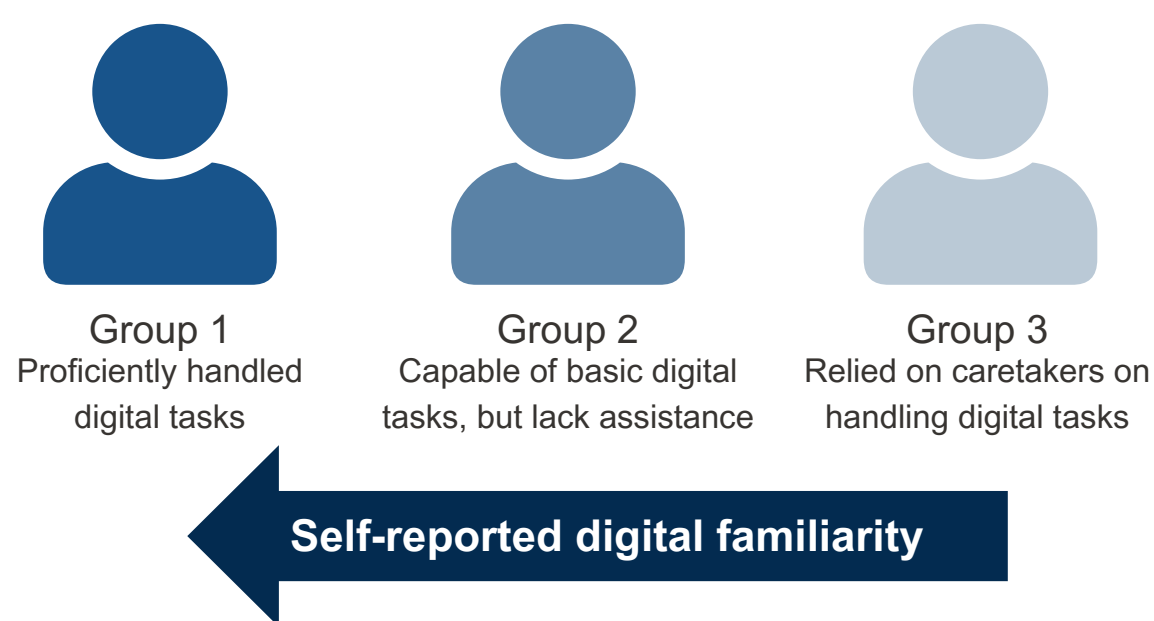Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

1 Introduction

Chronic diseases significantly impact global health, particularly in the elderly[1]. Regular follow-up is key for managing these conditions, but in-person visits often present challenges such as long wait times, transportation issues, and financial constraints[2-4]. The COVID-19 pandemic has further heightened infection concerns among this demographic. While telemedicine offers a promising alternative, its effective adoption may be hindered by limited digital literacy and internet access in some elderly patients[4].

2 Objective

The objectives of this study are to:
1. Assess the acceptability and feasibility of the TeleCU telemedicine platform for elderly patients.
2. Investigate how demographics, satisfaction, and perceptions of the TeleCU platform vary among elderly individuals with differing levels of self-perceived digital familiarity.

Group 1 Proficiently handled digital tasks

Group 2 Capable of basic digital tasks, but lack assistance

Group 3 Relied on caretakers on handling digital tasks

Self-reported digital familiarity

3 Methodology

Demographic information and online behavior patterns were collected from 710 elderly patients with chronic illnesses. These participants were categorized based on their self-reported digital familiarity. Following their telehealth sessions, they completed satisfaction and perception surveys. The association between digital familiarity and patient satisfaction and perception was analyzed using descriptive statistics and Fisher's exact test.

User research
Interviewed healthcare providers and elderly patients

Implementation
Pre-clinical screening
Video consultations

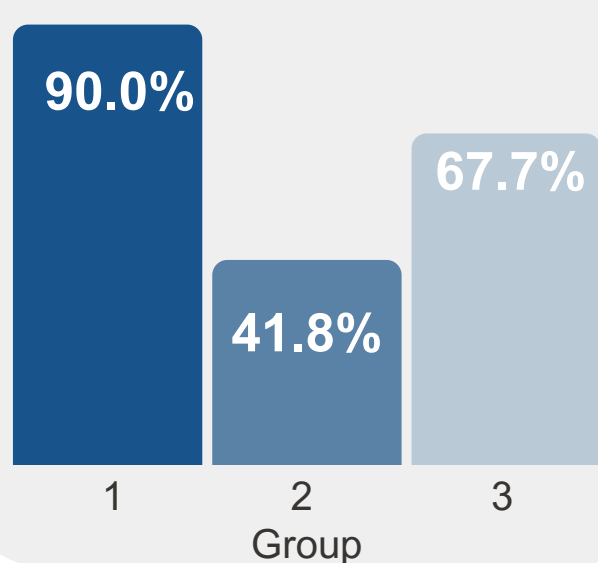**Evaluation survey**
Satifaction and perception on telehealth
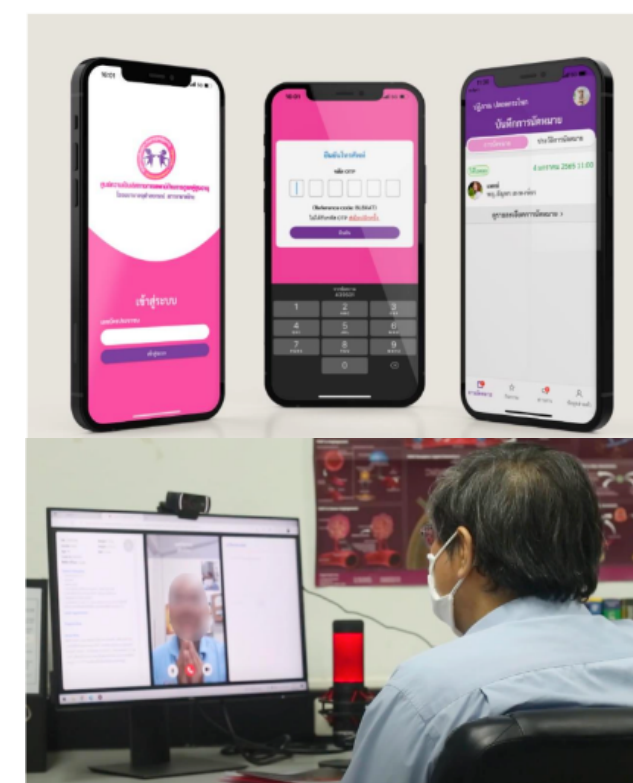
3 Results & Discussion

Telehealth Satisfaction and Perception: Overall, 96.7% were satisfied with their telehealth visit.

Proportion of Participants Rating Telemedicine ≥4/5 for Improving Healthcare Access

- Group 1: 90.0%
- Group 2: 41.8%
- Group 3: 67.7%

Elderly individuals with basic internet navigation skills but without caregiver support were significantly less likely to agree that telemedicine improves healthcare access (p = .003). In contrast, there was no significant difference in the positive perceptions between Group 1 and Group 3 (p = .239).

This suggests that caregiver assistance plays a key role in favorable telemedicine perceptions, on-demand help can increase engagement among the elderly[5,6].

Demographic Correlations: Digitally proficient seniors are predominantly male (p = .035), have a Bachelor's degree or higher (p < .001), and reside in Bangkok (p < .001). A higher educational level is associated with an increase in digital competency, where gender and domicile differences in digital proficiency could also be influenced by education[7].

5 Policy Recommendation & Conclusion

This research points to the critical need to address digital inequities in telemedicine. A holistic strategy that merges technological education with individualized assistance can can facilitate fair access to telemedicine for older adults, aiming for a more equitable healthcare system.

References

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