

# Preferences and Attitudes Towards Digital Communication and Symptom Reporting Methods in Clinical Trials [Letter]

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## Dear editor

We would like to express our appreciation for the insightful study conducted by McDowell et al on digital communication preferences and symptom reporting methods in clinical trials.<sup>1</sup> This research provides valuable contributions to the understanding of patient preferences, particularly in differentiating communication methods for social interactions and clinical settings. The study highlights that while messaging services are predominantly utilized for personal communication, patients exhibit a preference for phone calls when engaging with healthcare providers. Additionally, the findings emphasize the increasing acceptance of digital symptom reporting via smartphones and telehealth platforms, underscoring the potential of digital health technologies (DHTs) in facilitating patient-centered approaches in clinical trials.

While the study offers significant insights, several methodological aspects warrant further consideration. The research does not comprehensively address the potential biases that may arise from variations in participants' familiarity with digital technologies, which could influence their reported preferences. Furthermore, while a range of communication methods is explored, the study does not examine psychological and contextual factors—such as patient anxiety, trust in digital platforms, or prior experiences with clinical trials—that may shape these preferences. Additionally, a more detailed comparison of the effectiveness of different symptom reporting methods in terms of adherence, data accuracy, and patient engagement would further strengthen the study's implications.

To build upon these findings, future research should incorporate a deeper exploration of the psychological and behavioral determinants influencing digital communication preferences in clinical contexts.<sup>2</sup> A comparative analysis assessing the impact of various symptom reporting methods on clinical trial adherence and data reliability could provide valuable insights for optimizing patient-centered digital health interventions.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the integration of qualitative methodologies, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, could yield a richer understanding of the factors shaping patient preferences and contribute to the refinement of digital communication strategies in clinical research.<sup>4</sup> These considerations would enhance the applicability and effectiveness of digital health solutions in supporting patient engagement and trial participation.

## Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this work, the authors utilized QuillBot and SciSpace to refine the language without altering the scientific substance of the manuscript.

## Disclosure

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this communication.

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