“Behavioral Intervention Technologies for Depression”

Presented by:
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Abstract: Depression is common, debilitating, and current methods of treatment do not provide effective treatment for the vast majority of patients. Behavioral intervention technologies (BITs), which use information and communications technologies (currently the telephone, web, mobile phones, and sensors) to deliver behavioral and psychological interventions, offer the promise of extending treatment into the lives of our patients. Delivering psychotherapy by telephone can extend treatment, overcoming geographic barriers, but does not address cost barriers. Web-based interventions, and more recently mobile interventions, attempt to translate psychological treatment models into applications that deliver treatment. These interventions can be effective, but demand engagement by users, and thus often require some level of human support to maintain motivation and engagement. Models for providing low intensity human support will be described. More recent work focuses on harnessing the affordances of technologies to decrease user effort. A recent line of research is attempting to use sensor data (GPS, WiFi, accelerometers, Bluetooth, light sensors, etc.) from mobile phones to develop models that can passively identify treatment relevant user states (location, activity, social context, and emotional state), which can in turn be used to trigger just-in-time positive reinforcement of treatment congruent activities and assistance when risk states are detected. Finally, a brief description of the Center for Behavioral Intervention Technologies (CBITs; www.cbits.northwestern.edu) and its development frameworks will be provided.

Biography: Dr. Mohr’s work lies at the intersection of behavioral science, technology, and clinical intervention research. This research has focused on developing and evaluating eHealth and mHealth interventions aimed at treating and preventing depression, improving symptom management among patients with chronic illnesses, and increasing adherence to medications. He is particularly interested in understanding how people interact with behavioral intervention technologies, and how the design of the technologies can optimize behavior change and improve clinical outcomes. He is also interested in factors that promote adherence to these intervention technologies. For more of Dr. Mohr’s research, go to the Mohr Lab website

March 5, 2014 (Wednesday)
12:00-1:00pm
Northwestern University
Dept. of Preventive Medicine
Stamler Conference Room
680 N. Lake Shore Drive, Suite 1400, Chicago, IL 60611

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