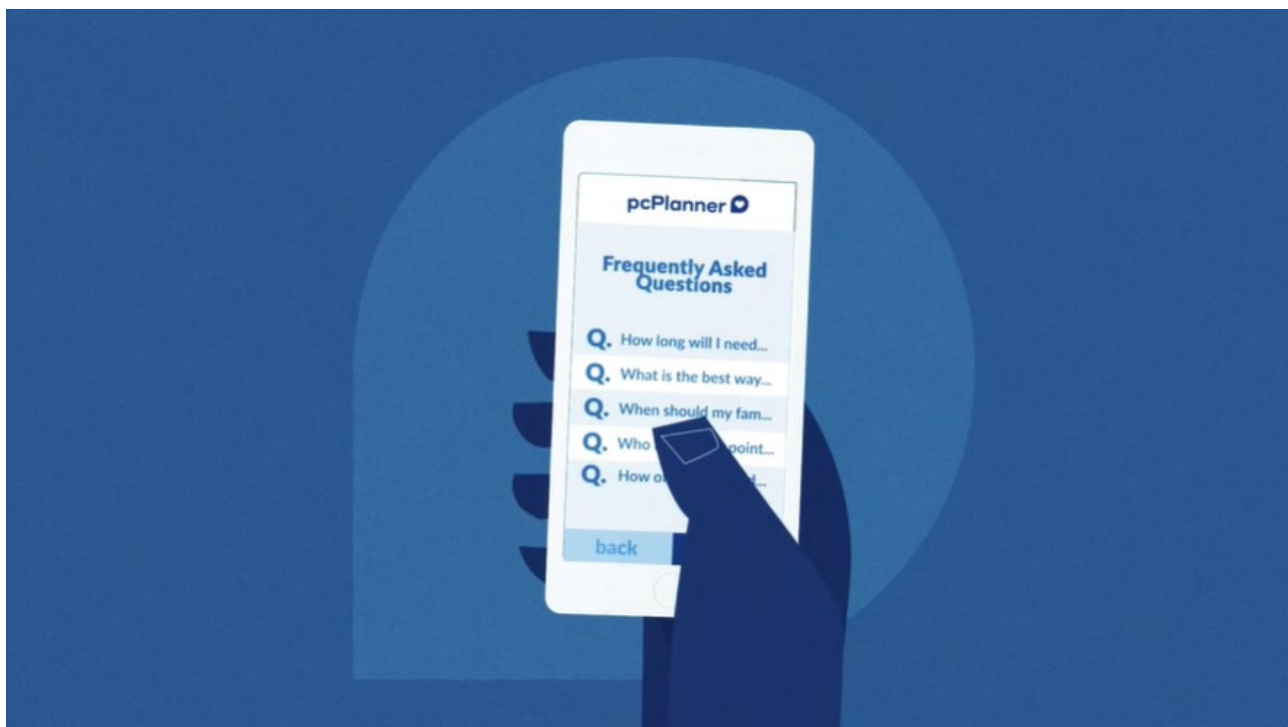


Mobile App-Facilitated Collaborative Palliative Care Intervention for Critically Ill Older Adults (PCplanner Study)

Pro # Pro00101745 · **NCT #** NCT04414787



Why We Did This Study

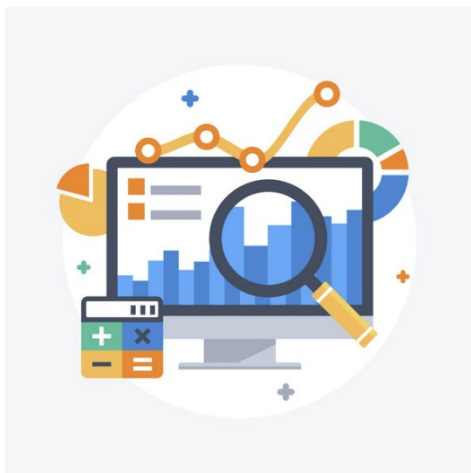
Families of patients in the intensive care unit (ICU) — a hospital area for the most seriously ill — often have unmet needs around comfort, communication, and end-of-life decisions. Few good systems exist to help ICU doctors and palliative care (comfort care) specialists work together to address these needs. Researchers wanted to test whether a mobile app could help these two teams better support families of critically ill older adults.

Who Participated in This Study?

The study included 151 critically ill patients aged 50 or older. Each had been in the ICU for at least 24 hours and had a serious health condition, such as organ failure or advanced cancer. One family member per patient also joined — 151 family members total, mostly women (73%), average age 57. ICU doctors also took part. The study ran from April 2021 to September 2023 at two hospitals.



What Were the Results?



The app did not reduce family members' unmet care needs more than usual care. Both groups had similar small drops in need scores over 3 and 7 days. Families using the app were more likely to have ICU family meetings (87% vs. 64%). They also had more visits from comfort care specialists (38% vs. 4%). Symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress at 3 months did not differ between groups.

What Do These Results Mean?

The app worked as planned and led to more family meetings and specialist visits. But it did not reduce families' unmet care needs compared to regular ICU care. Many patients left the ICU quickly, limiting how much of the program they received. Future studies may do better by focusing on patients who stay in the ICU longer, or by extending support to other hospital areas.
