

SBRI HEALTHCARE – WORKING ACROSS CLINICAL PATHWAYS TO BRING NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO THE NHS



The imperative for the NHS to do more with less is well recognised and none more so than in the recent and much anticipated mental health taskforce report that recommends an extra £1bn be invested to ensure mental health forms part of the government's view for a seven-day NHS.

The need for responsive and easily accessible mental health services cannot be underestimated nor can the new technology required to deliver real clinical pathway improvement. The additional funding committed by the government is only part of the solution but identifying, nurturing, adopting innovation will also be key to radically transforming UK-wide mental health services and addressing the associated health inequalities.

Working across multiple clinical pathways considered as areas of the

highest unmet healthcare need, SBRI Healthcare is an NHS England-backed programme that funds companies to develop innovative products that solve health problems. The programme is run by the UK's 15 Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs), whose role is to promote UK economic growth by spreading innovation and best practice across the NHS. Generally taking a three-phased development approach, projects start with a 6 month feasibility phase, moving on to a more detailed product development, and are then given an opportunity for validation in NHS setting to accelerate product adoption.

Identified as an area of significant unmet need, SBRI Healthcare is already supporting a number of companies developing new products in the area of mental health.



Mayden has developed Prism, a cloud-based hub to enable NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) patients to be referred for online therapy, with progress notes received seamlessly and securely back into the patient record. This means that patients can access therapy more quickly, from home, at a time that suits them.

“ NHS IAPT services provide treatment to people with anxiety and depression. Over 5 million people in the UK suffer from depression alone but IAPT services have the capacity to meet just 15% of known need. Many of these patients are suitable for online therapy and funding from SBRI Healthcare has helped us remove some of the barriers facing NHS services when adopting these treatments, and most importantly is giving patients more choice in how and when they want their care to be delivered.”

Chris Eldridge, Director of Operations, Mayden



P1vital has developed a machine learning based online app, the PREDicT Test, designed for depressed patients to predict early in treatment whether their antidepressant is working. Antidepressants are widely prescribed but take 4-6 weeks before patients feel better with two thirds of patients not responding to the first drug prescribed. Identifying an effective antidepressant within days not months provides benefit to millions of patients and reduces the economic burden of depression which costs the NHS over £11bn/yr.

“ Funding from SBRI Healthcare helped P1vital complete a clinical study in primary care that demonstrated the significant benefits of the PREDicT Test to patients suffering from depression and its potential to reduce healthcare and societal costs. Results from this study were instrumental in securing €4m from the EU Commission for further R&D across Europe.”

Jonathan Kingslake, CEO, P1vital Products



ProReal has developed an avatar-based, virtual-world software platform, which early evidence suggests can deliver effective mental health interventions for people with mood disorders such as anxiety, depression and trauma. As an online representation of the user's world, the technology supports self-expression, affect labelling and regulation, thereby reducing levels of psychological distress and providing a more accessible pathway to treatment for young people in particular.

“ We couldn't do this work without the support of SBRI Healthcare and guidance from NIHR / MindTech. They make it possible for small businesses to bring innovation to the NHS, and in mental health this has never been more important. We look forward to making this service accessible to many more young people.”

Andrew Jackson, Chief Executive, ProReal