

“Digital and Telehealth Tools”

Episode Overview

In this episode, I examine how digital and telehealth tools, from smartphone apps and wearable sensors to virtual overdose-monitoring services, are being used to address opioid use disorder and overdose risk. I explore what the research says about their effectiveness, how people who use drugs perceive them, and the challenges of making these technologies accessible, trustworthy, and well-integrated into care systems.



- Hundreds of opioid-related apps now exist, though many have limited functionality or accessibility barriers like paywalls or invitations.
- Wearables and biosensors are new tools that can detect overdoses or signal the need for naloxone.
- Health systems use digital tools mostly as *supplements* to, not replacements for, traditional in-person care.

TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Digital tools show promise for expanding recovery support, enhancing overdose detection, and reaching people who use alone, but only if users trust the technology and can access it easily.
- ✓ Barriers like cost, privacy concerns, unreliable phone service, and fears of surveillance limit uptake.

References & Future Reading

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