

ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS)



ISRG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjahss>

Volume – III Issue-I (January- February) 2025

Frequency: Bimonthly



Dynamics of Adoption and Usage of AI-Powered Smart Gadgets for Stroke Management among Survivors in Southeast Nigeria

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| **Received:** 23.01.2025 | **Accepted:** 27.01.2025 | **Published:** 30.01.2025

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Abstract

Stroke remains one of the leading causes of disability and death in Nigeria, and its long-term effects on survivors often require continuous management for improved quality of life. As technology evolves, AI-powered smart gadgets like smartwatches and ECG monitors have emerged as promising tools for stroke management, offering survivors personalized healthcare solutions, real-time monitoring, and rehabilitation support. The main objective of this research is to investigate the key factors driving the adoption of AI-powered smart gadgets among stroke survivors, assess the barriers to their usage, and evaluate the perceived effectiveness of these gadgets in managing post-stroke health and recovery. The study was anchored on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) which was used to understand the factors that influence the knowledge and utilization of technological innovations like smartwatches and ECG monitors for stroke management. A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing in-depth interviews to gather data from stroke survivors in selected Universities in Southeast Nigeria who are either currently using or have used AI-powered smart gadgets for stroke management. Purposive sampling was used to select participants from various Universities in the region. Findings suggest that while there is growing interest among stroke survivors in adopting AI-powered smart gadgets, the uptake remains relatively low. Factors such as the high cost of devices, limited access to training, and a lack of comprehensive knowledge about the technologies significantly hinder their adoption. However, survivors who have adopted these gadgets report positive outcomes, including improved monitoring of health conditions, enhanced rehabilitation, and a greater sense of control over their recovery. The study recommends increased efforts to promote awareness of AI-powered devices, provide adequate training for stroke survivors and healthcare providers, and explore policy interventions to make these technologies more accessible to the broader population of stroke survivors in the region.

Keywords: Adoption, Usage, AI-Powered Smart Gadgets, Stroke, Management, Survivors, Southeast Nigeria

Introduction

Health communication has undergone significant shifts over the past decade, highlighting the indispensable role of Artificial Intelligence. Nwafor, Nwokoro and Omoeva (2022) note that as AI continue to emerge, health communicators rely on information channels to spread health messages, and the general public makes use of these channels to pull information and push it to their network. However, in recent times, AI-powered gadgets have leveraged innovative approaches, promoting seamless connection and real-time information dissemination in the healthcare sector globally (World Health Organisation, 2020). The advent of AI-powered gadgets has ushered in an era of robust communication strategies offering personalised patient care, leading to improved health outcomes, and equal opportunities for everyone to access quality healthcare, despite geographical disparities (Wolf & Veinot, 2020). This explains the assertion of Guanah, Agbanu, and Obi (2020) who aver that the situation whereby machines (robots) perform the duties hitherto done by humans, and even do them better and faster is the age we are fast approaching. The researchers concluded that this era would be dominated by Artificial Intelligence (AI), also known as machine intelligence, and humans would be relegated to the background while machines take the lead in almost every field of human endeavour.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)--powered smart gadgets, such as smartwatches and Electrocardiogram (ECG) monitors, have emerged as transformative tools in the healthcare sector. These devices integrate machine learning algorithms to detect irregularities in heart rhythms, track vital signs, and provide early warnings for stroke risks. Research indicates that such digital communication technologies can significantly enhance health outcomes through early detection and intervention (Xia, 2023). Nwafor, Muoboghare, & Osafire (2022) aver that healthcare providers are now able to more efficiently market to patients and potential customers because of AI and other technology breakthroughs. Medical providers are enhancing their communication efforts in several ways, including through text messaging from other health experts and online portals where patients can message doctors. A survey by Eze, Onuoha, and Oyesanya (2020) revealed that the incorporation of artificial intelligence, such as smartwatches and Electrocardiogram (ECG) monitors, into the Nigerian health infrastructure has received positive acclaim. These instruments are crucial in disseminating health information effectively. They ease the process of communicating health matters between care providers, patients, and the public at large (Akintola, Adebisi & Adekola, 2022). Market trends for digital health communication in Nigeria and other countries have shown significant growth in recent years. With an increasing number of users transitioning to artificial intelligence, integration with digital health is inevitable (Okonji, 2022).

Today, these gadgets have permeated every aspect of our lives, enhancing the way we consume health information and services. For rural areas with fewer healthcare facilities, artificial intelligence offers an invaluable solution to accessing health services, including those prevalent in Nigeria as well as other regions of the globe. For one, it enhances patient education and adherence to healthcare regimes (Akande-Sholabi, Ogungbade, & Adisa, 2023). Additionally, it improves preventive care and elevates patients' health literacy levels, enabling them to take charge of their health decisions. This is why Nwammuo, Obi and

Nwafor (2015) argue that by their information dissemination function, mass media interact with all other social institutions in society to inform, educate and entertain. However, Nwammuo and Nwafor (2017) note that New digital media technology such as AI-powered smartwatches and ECG monitors are considered central drivers of creative industries like the healthcare sector.

However, one major health challenge that requires a robust implementation of the use of artificial intelligence to communicate its prevention and management is stroke. With the progression of technology and the ageing of the population, the incidence of stroke is increasing globally. A stroke is a severe medical condition that requires immediate treatment (Nigeria Health Watch, 2023). Stroke can be referred to as a medical emergency that occurs when there is a sudden interruption of blood flow to the brain. It leads to permanent damage, disability, and even death. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), stroke is the second leading cause of death worldwide and in Africa, causing over 100,000 deaths annually (Osuntokun, 2017). In the United States, for example, more than 75% of all strokes occur in individuals over the age of 50 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2017).

Stroke is a significant cause of mortality and disability globally, particularly among older adults. In Nigeria, stroke accounts for a substantial portion of non-communicable diseases, with an increasing prevalence among the ageing population (WHO, 2020). Stroke is especially prevalent among older adults who tend to have comorbid conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol levels. Addressing stroke prevention and effective management strategies is crucial to mitigate its impact on public health. Thus, timely access to medical attention can significantly improve a patient's prognosis, with modern digital health communication playing a significant role, particularly among older adults (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2023).

While there have been significant advances in stroke prevention and treatment over the past several decades, there is still a need for innovative approaches to reduce the incidence and burden of stroke, particularly among older adults working in universities. AI-powered smart gadgets have the potential to play a significant role in this effort by providing individuals with tools and resources to manage their health better and reduce their risk of stroke. AI-powered smart gadgets such as smartwatches and ECG Monitors have been introduced as convenient and accessible tools for promoting healthy behaviours and tracking health indicators among older university employees, especially in the universities. These technologies can provide personalised health information, reminders for medication adherence, and tracking physical activity levels.

Smartwatches are multifunctional wearable devices that offer features such as heart rate monitoring, blood pressure tracking, and electrocardiogram (ECG) functionality. Through their integration with mobile applications, these devices enable real-time health monitoring and instant communication with healthcare providers. Studies have shown that smartwatches equipped with AI algorithms can predict atrial fibrillation, a significant precursor to stroke, with remarkable accuracy (Chen, Zhao, & Wang, 2022). On the other hand, ECG monitors are specialized devices designed to detect irregular heart rhythms and provide diagnostic insights. Their portability and ease of use make them particularly valuable for continuous monitoring. Advanced models use AI to interpret ECG readings, alerting users and healthcare providers to potential

health risks in real time (Jones, Smith, & Thompson, 2023). These features are critical for managing the chronic conditions often associated with stroke risk.

According to Küfeoğlu (2022), the integration of AI-powered smart gadgets into healthcare paradigms, particularly for stroke prevention and management, underscores a transformative shift in the approach to elder care. Knowledge of these innovations is crucial, as they offer functionalities that can enhance monitoring, early detection, and real-time intervention capabilities among older adults. Such devices can actively track vital signs, analyze data trends, and prompt healthcare interventions, aligning with the findings that highlight challenges posed by climate change and socio-economic factors in developing regions, such as Africa, where such health disparities are prevalent. Moreover, emerging technologies like AI not only aid in individual health management but also reinforce community health initiatives, thereby contributing to sustainable development goals (Küfeoğlu, 2022). This comprehensive understanding is imperative for university employees in Southeast Nigeria, who may benefit significantly from adopting these technologies to mitigate stroke risk and improve management outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Stroke is a major cause of disability and mortality in Southeast Nigeria, where survivors often encounter significant barriers to effective management and rehabilitation. AI-powered smart gadgets, specifically smartwatches and wearable ECG monitors, have the potential to revolutionize stroke care by providing continuous health monitoring and personalized support. These devices can track vital signs, detect irregular heart rhythms, and offer real-time feedback, thereby aiding in the early detection of complications and improving overall health outcomes. Despite their potential benefits, the adoption and usage of smartwatches and ECG monitors among stroke survivors in Southeast Nigeria remain limited. Key barriers include a lack of awareness about the availability and advantages of these technologies, concerns over affordability, limited technological literacy, and cultural attitudes towards technology in healthcare. Additionally, healthcare providers may be reluctant to recommend these devices due to insufficient training and resource constraints. Understanding the dynamics of the adoption and usage of smartwatches and ECG monitors is essential for developing targeted interventions that can enhance stroke care in the region. This study aims to identify the factors influencing the adoption and usage of these devices, assess the perceived benefits and challenges, and propose strategies to promote their widespread use. By addressing these issues, the study seeks to improve the quality of life and health outcomes for stroke survivors in Southeast Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to assess the knowledge and utilization of AI-powered smart gadgets like smartwatches and ECG monitors for stroke prevention and management among older university employees in Southeast Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. To determine the respondents' level of knowledge of AI-powered smartwatches and ECG smart gadgets **for stroke management**
2. To assess the extent of utilization of AI-powered smartwatches and ECG smart gadgets for stroke management **among the respondents.**

3. **Determine the utilization patterns of** AI-powered smartwatches and ECG smart gadgets **for stroke management among the respondents.**
4. **Analyze the relationship between the level of knowledge and utilization patterns of** AI-powered smartwatches and ECG smart gadgets **for stroke management among the respondents.**
5. **Assess the relationship between the utilization of** AI-powered smartwatches and ECG smart gadgets **and the effectiveness of stroke management among the respondents.**
6. Examine the factors influencing respondents' utilization of AI-powered smartwatches and ECG smart gadgets for stroke management.

Theoretical Framework

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) was adopted for this study to understand the factors that influence the knowledge and utilization of technological innovation, including AI-powered smart gadgets like smartwatches and ECG monitors for stroke prevention and management. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) framework was introduced by Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, and Davis (2003). The UTAUT model is based on four influential theoretical models, including the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989), the Motivational Model (MM) (Venkatesh, 1999), and Model of PC Utilization (MPCU) (Thompson et al., 1991). The UTAUT model seeks to integrate a range of cognitive, social, and contextual factors that influence individuals' intentions to use and actual use of technology. The UTAUT is an influential theoretical model that was developed to understand the factors that influence individuals' intentions to use and actual use of technology. The UTAUT provides a comprehensive understanding of the determinants of technology usage by incorporating a range of constructs such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. Through a systematic analysis of existing studies, this paper evaluates the usability and applicability of the UTAUT framework in various contexts and contexts.

The UTAUT model proposes that four main constructs significantly influence technology adoption and use: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. Performance expectancy refers to individuals' perceptions of how using technology will improve their job performance. Effort expectancy refers to individuals' beliefs of how easy or difficult it is to use technology. Social influence refers to the impact of social factors such as normative pressure on individuals' attitudes and intentions to use technology. Facilitating conditions refer to factors that enable or constrain technology use, such as access, support, and technical infrastructure.

This theory is relevant to the study because its constructs can be used to design AI-powered smart gadgets that are accessible, user-friendly, and can provide numerous benefits to stroke patients. Furthermore, the moderating factors such as gender and age that influence technology adoption and utilization should be considered in the design of AI-powered smart gadgets for stroke prevention and management among older university employees in Nigeria. The application of UTAUT can help healthcare professionals to

understand the factors that influence technology adoption among older adults, which, in turn, can lead to the improved prevention and management of stroke in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Use of AI-Powered Smart Gadgets for Stroke Prevention and Management

AI-powered smart gadgets can facilitate stroke prevention through various features that help to monitor and manage cardiovascular risk factors. For example, smartwatches that incorporate heart rate sensors can provide continuous monitoring of the user's heart rate variability, which is an indicator of autonomic nervous system activity. This information can help to identify abnormal heart rhythms and alert the user to seek medical attention. Similarly, mobile applications that incorporate digital coaching features can provide users with personalized guidance on lifestyle modifications such as diet, exercise, and smoking cessation, which are essential for stroke prevention. Nwafor, Aghaebe, Bartholomew, and Umuzue (2024) aver that traditional media forms like print, television, and radio, have held the mantle in educating and engaging the public on these health matters. Several other studies have investigated the effectiveness of AI powered smart gadgets in stroke prevention. For instance, a randomized controlled trial conducted by Peng et al. (2020) found that a self-management application for type 2 diabetes patients significantly improved glycemic control compared to the control group. Furthermore, Kwon et al. (2020) found that a mobile application for hypertension control was effective in reducing blood pressure in elderly patients. Similarly, Fragale et al. (2020) found that an interactive mobile application for breast cancer prevention in high-risk women was effective in increasing knowledge and behavior change.

AI powered smart gadgets can also aid in stroke management by facilitating early detection of stroke symptoms, reducing delays in seeking medical attention, and improving access to stroke rehabilitation. For example, mobile applications that incorporate telemedicine features can enable remote monitoring of stroke patients' vital signs, such as blood pressure and heart rate, by healthcare professionals, which can lead to early detection of complications and timely intervention. Similarly, smartwatches that incorporate accelerometer sensors can enable remote monitoring of stroke patients' physical activity, which is an essential factor in stroke rehabilitation. Numerous studies have investigated the effectiveness of AI powered smart gadgets in stroke management. For instance, Rho et al. (2021) found that mobile phone-based messages were effective in enhancing cardiac rehabilitation in patients with coronary artery disease. Moreover, Snoswell et al. (2020) found that telehealth was effective in chronic disease management, including stroke. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2021) found that remote home monitoring for patients with heart failure was effective through smart devices.

Despite the potential benefits of AI powered smart gadgets in stroke prevention and management, several barriers hinder their adoption. First, the lack of digital literacy among older adults may affect their ability to use and benefit from these technologies. Second, the cost of smart technologies, especially in low-income countries and communities, may limit their accessibility and affordability. Third, concerns about data privacy and security may deter some users from using these technologies. Fourth, the lack of evidence-based guidelines for the use of AI-powered smart gadgets in stroke prevention and management may lead to their inappropriate use.

AI-powered smart gadgets have tremendous potential in stroke prevention and management through their varied features, which enable the detection and management of stroke risk factors, remote monitoring of vital signs, and access to stroke rehabilitation. Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of AI-powered smart gadgets in stroke prevention and management. However, several barriers hinder their adoption, including the lack of digital literacy among older adults, costs, concerns about data privacy, and lack of evidence-based guidelines. Healthcare professionals and policymakers should work towards addressing these barriers to enable the widespread adoption of AI-powered smart gadgets in stroke prevention and management, leading to improved outcomes and reduced healthcare costs.

Stroke prevention involves strategies aimed at reducing the risk of stroke in individuals who have not yet experienced a stroke. AI-powered smart gadgets have several applications in stroke prevention in Nigeria. These include:

1. **Telemedicine:** Telemedicine involves the use of AI-powered smart gadgets to provide healthcare services remotely. This is particularly useful in areas where there is limited access to healthcare services. Telemedicine can be used to provide stroke risk assessments, educate patients on stroke prevention, and monitor patients remotely. Telemedicine can be used to provide remote consultations with stroke specialists, monitor patients' progress, and provide rehabilitation services remotely.
2. **Wearable technology:** Wearable technology refers to devices that are worn on the body and can track and monitor health conditions. Examples of wearable technology include smartwatches and fitness trackers. These devices can be used to track physical activity, heart rate, blood pressure, and other vital signs. This information can be used to assess an individual's risk of stroke and to provide customized recommendations for stroke prevention. Wearable technology can be used to monitor patients' vital signs and ensure that they are receiving appropriate care. For example, a wearable device can track the patient's heart rate and alert healthcare providers if the heart rate becomes too high or too low.
3. **Mobile applications:** Several mobile applications can be used for stroke prevention in Nigeria. These applications provide information on stroke prevention, track physical activity and diet, and remind users of medication and health appointments. Several mobile applications can also be used for stroke management in Nigeria. These applications provide information on stroke rehabilitation exercises, track medication and appointments, and remind users of medical tasks.
4. **Social media:** Social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, can provide information on stroke prevention and encourage healthy behaviors. Health organizations and healthcare providers can use social media to interact with patients and provide educational content. Specifically, Nwafor and Nnaemeka (2023) aver that TikTok's short and visually appealing videos and extensive user base have made it a potential platform for promoting awareness and understanding of health issues, including stroke prevention and management.

5. **Virtual reality:** Virtual reality technology can provide stroke rehabilitation exercises in a virtual environment. This can be particularly useful for patients who live in remote areas and do not have access to rehabilitation services.

While AI-powered smart gadgets have several applications in stroke prevention and management in Nigeria, several challenges need to be addressed. These include:

- **Limited access to technology:** Many Nigerians do not have access to smart technologies, limiting their ability to use them for stroke prevention and management.
- **Limited health literacy:** Many Nigerians do not have sufficient knowledge about stroke prevention and management. This limits their ability to use AI-powered smart gadgets effectively.
- **Limited Internet connectivity:** Many areas in Nigeria have limited Internet connectivity, which makes it difficult to use telemedicine and mobile applications.
- **Limited healthcare resources:** Nigeria has a shortage of healthcare providers, particularly in rural areas. This makes it difficult to provide healthcare services, including stroke prevention and management.

Thus, AI-powered smart gadgets have several applications in stroke prevention and management in Nigeria. These technologies can be used to provide remote healthcare services, track and monitor vital signs, provide education and rehabilitation exercises, and more. However, several challenges need to be addressed, including limited access to technology, limited health literacy, limited internet connectivity, and limited healthcare resources. By addressing these challenges and taking advantage of the opportunities presented by smart technologies, Nigeria can improve stroke prevention and management, reduce the burden of stroke on individuals and families, and improve the overall healthcare system.

Methodology

The interview method was employed in this study to uncover both immediate and underlying factors influencing respondents' answers in the survey. It also served to verify the survey findings by identifying areas of alignment and divergence between the two datasets. The sample size for the in-depth interviews comprised six stroke survivors from three universities, two from each state in Southeast Nigeria: Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbaram; University of Nigeria, Nsukka; and Abia State University, Uturu. This selection resulted in a total of three respondents. The choice of three stroke survivors was justified based on the principle of theoretical saturation. As Morse (2007) and Guest, Greg, Bunce, Arwen, and Johnson, Laura (2006, p. 78) suggest, for studies involving populations with a high degree of homogeneity, "a sample of six or fewer interviews may be sufficient to enable the development of meaningful themes and useful interpretations." To identify suitable respondents, the researcher employed a screener questionnaire to pinpoint stroke survivors who had successfully managed their condition. Appointments were then scheduled with these individuals, and each interview was allotted one hour. A tape recorder was used to capture the interviews for accurate transcription and analysis. Data were collected through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, allowing for flexible discussions while focusing on key themes like Knowledge of AI-powered smartwatches and ECG Smart Gadgets,

Extent of Utilization of AI-powered smart Gadgets, Utilization Patterns of AI-powered smart Technologies, Relationship Between Knowledge and Utilization Patterns, Impact of Utilization on Effective Stroke Management and Barriers and Facilitators to Knowledge and Utilization The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, with transcriptions reviewed and categorized based on emerging patterns. The research employed Huberman's (1994) qualitative data analysis model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This method helped identify key themes related to students' experiences and intercultural interactions. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and participant confidentiality, were strictly observed, and triangulation was used to ensure data validity. Reliability was ensured through careful documentation and member checking, where participants reviewed the findings to confirm accuracy and avoid researcher bias.

Data Presentation and Analysis Transcript of In-Depth Interview

Theme 1: Knowledge of AI-Powered Smartwatches and ECG Smart Gadgets

Understanding of AI-powered smartwatches and ECG gadgets

Survivor 1: "I know that smartwatches can track a variety of health metrics such as heart rate, steps, and even sleep patterns. I first learned about these devices through advertisements and a few articles I read online. The idea that a device on your wrist could monitor your health sounded fascinating. ECG gadgets, on the other hand, I heard about from my cardiologist. These gadgets can detect irregular heartbeats and provide detailed reports on heart health. I believe the most beneficial features for stroke prevention are the constant heart rate monitoring and the ability to detect anomalies early on, which can prompt a visit to the doctor before things get worse."

Survivor 2: "I'm aware that smartwatches and ECG monitors can track vital signs and detect potential health issues like atrial fibrillation. I first came across these technologies in a health magazine article and then did more research online. The beneficial features include real-time heart rate monitoring, notifications for irregular heartbeats, and the ability to sync with health apps for detailed tracking. These features can be critical for preventing strokes as they provide early warnings and continuous monitoring without the need for frequent doctor visits."

Survivor 3: "These devices are designed to keep track of various health metrics, particularly those related to heart health, which is crucial for stroke prevention. I first heard about them through a friend who uses a smartwatch for fitness tracking. The features that stand out to me include monitoring heart rate, providing alerts for abnormal readings, and tracking physical activity levels, which are all important for maintaining heart health and preventing strokes."

Survivor 4: "Smartwatches and ECG gadgets are advanced tools that can monitor heart conditions and other vital signs. I learned about these from my primary care physician and through TV commercials. The ability to monitor heart rate continuously and receive alerts for irregularities is beneficial. These devices also track physical activity and sleep patterns, which can provide a holistic view of one's health and help in managing conditions that could lead to a stroke."

Survivor 5: "These gadgets can track heart rate, detect irregularities, and help in overall health monitoring. I became

aware of them during a health fair at my community center, where they demonstrated how these devices work. Real-time monitoring and immediate notifications for any abnormalities are the most beneficial features for stroke prevention. They allow for quick response and timely medical intervention."

Survivor 6: "Smartwatches and ECG gadgets are designed to monitor various health metrics, particularly those related to heart health, which is vital for stroke prevention. I first learned about these technologies from an online health forum. Continuous heart rate monitoring, alerts for abnormal heart rhythms, and the ability to review historical health data are key features. These functionalities help in early detection and management of potential stroke risks."

The responses indicate a good level of knowledge among the survivors, with half of them displaying high knowledge and the other half moderate knowledge.

Theme 2: Extent of Utilization of AI-Powered Smart Gadgets

Use of AI-powered devices

Survivor 1: "I have never used a smartwatch or ECG gadget for health monitoring. I think they are useful, but I haven't felt the need to invest in one yet. Maybe if I understood them better or had a specific recommendation from my doctor, I might consider using them."

Survivor 2: "Yes, I use a smartwatch daily for health monitoring. I use it to track my heart rate, steps, and sleep patterns. I find it especially useful when I'm exercising or feeling unwell, as I can monitor my heart rate in real-time. I also use the ECG feature regularly to check for any irregularities."

Survivor 3: "I use a smartwatch occasionally, mostly to track my steps and heart rate when I exercise. I don't use it every day, but I find it helpful when I do. I tend to rely on it more when I'm feeling off or stressed, as it helps me keep track of how my body is responding."

Survivor 4: "I have an ECG monitor that I use regularly. I check my heart rate and rhythm a few times a week, especially when I feel symptoms like palpitations or dizziness. It helps me stay on top of my health and provides peace of mind."

Survivor 5: "I don't currently use these devices, but I'm interested in getting one. I think they could be very useful, but I need to learn more about them and how to use them effectively. I would also need to discuss it with my healthcare provider to make sure it's the right choice for me."

Survivor 6: "I use a smartwatch almost daily to monitor my heart rate and physical activity. It's become a part of my routine, and I feel more in control of my health because of it. I use the ECG feature occasionally, especially when I'm feeling anxious or notice any unusual symptoms."

The majority of the survivors are utilizing these devices to some extent, with half using them regularly, one using them occasionally, and two not using them at all.

Theme 3: Utilization Patterns of AI-Powered Smart Technologies

Patterns of use

Survivor 1: "I don't have a pattern because I don't use these gadgets. If I did use them, I think I would need to integrate them

into my daily routine gradually. For example, I might start by using the heart rate monitoring feature during my morning walks and gradually add other features like sleep tracking."

Survivor 2: "I wear my smartwatch all day. I check my heart rate multiple times throughout the day, especially when I'm exercising. I also use it to monitor my sleep patterns. The watch sends me reminders to move if I've been inactive for a while, and I find this really helpful for maintaining my activity levels. I've integrated it fully into my daily routine and healthcare practices."

Survivor 3: "I typically use my smartwatch when I'm exercising. I track my steps and heart rate to ensure I'm within a safe range. I don't use it every day, but I try to remember to put it on during my workouts. The features I use most often are step tracking and heart rate monitoring because they help me gauge my fitness level and ensure my heart is functioning properly."

Survivor 4: "I use my ECG monitor a few times a week. I check my heart rate and rhythm, especially when I feel any symptoms like palpitations or dizziness. The feature I use most often is the ECG monitoring because it provides detailed information about my heart health. I haven't fully integrated it into my daily routine, but it's an essential part of my health management."

Survivor 5: "I don't use these gadgets yet, but I plan to start soon. When I do, I think I will use the heart rate monitoring and step tracking features the most. These seem like they would be the most useful for me in monitoring my overall health and fitness."

Survivor 6: "I use my smartwatch daily. I check my heart rate, track my steps, and monitor my sleep patterns. The features I use most often are the heart rate monitor and step counter. I've integrated the smartwatch into my daily routine, and it's become a key part of my healthcare practices. I feel more in control of my health because of the continuous monitoring and feedback."

The utilization patterns show that two survivors use the devices daily, one uses them based on symptoms, one uses them primarily during exercise, and two do not use them at all.

Theme 4: Relationship between Knowledge and Utilization Patterns

Influence of knowledge on use

Survivor 1: "My limited understanding of these gadgets has definitely influenced my decision not to use them. I feel that if I had more information and guidance, I might be more inclined to try them. Right now, the lack of knowledge is a big barrier."

Survivor 2: "My knowledge about the benefits and functionalities of these devices has significantly influenced my usage. I feel confident using my smartwatch because I understand how it can help me monitor my health and prevent issues. Greater knowledge definitely improves usage."

Survivor 3: "I think I would use these gadgets more if I had a better understanding of how they work and what they can do. I use my smartwatch occasionally, but I feel there's a lot more I could be doing with it if I knew more about its features. The main barrier for me is the lack of detailed information."

Survivor 4: "I started using my ECG monitor after my doctor explained its benefits. My understanding of how it works and how it can help me manage my heart health has definitely influenced my decision to use it regularly. I think greater knowledge would improve my usage even more."

Survivor 5: "I haven't used these gadgets yet because I don't know enough about them. I believe that if I had more knowledge and information on how to use them effectively, I would be more likely to start using them. The main barriers for me are the cost and the complexity of the technology. It seems daunting to figure out how to integrate them into my daily routine without proper guidance."

Survivor 6: "My understanding of these gadgets has greatly influenced my decision to use them. The more I learned about their benefits and functionalities, the more confident I became in using them. I believe that having comprehensive knowledge about these technologies enhances their usage. The main barrier I experienced was initially understanding how to interpret the data, but with time and practice, I overcame this challenge."

The responses indicate that increased knowledge positively influences the decision to use these gadgets, as seen in Survivors 2, 4, and 6. Survivor 3 exhibits moderate influence, and Survivors 1 and 5 show that lack of knowledge is a significant barrier to usage.

Theme 5: Impact of Utilization on Effective Stroke Management

Benefits and effectiveness

Survivor 1: "I can't comment on the effectiveness since I don't use them. However, from what I've heard, these devices sound like they could be very helpful. If I were to start using them, I would hope they would make me feel more in control of my health and provide early warnings for any potential issues. I believe that having real-time data on my health could prevent complications by allowing timely medical intervention."

Survivor 2: "The smartwatch helps me keep track of my fitness and health. I feel more in control and aware of my condition. It's like having a personal health assistant with me at all times. The data it provides has been instrumental in helping me maintain a healthy lifestyle and prevent complications. For example, I can see how my heart rate responds to different activities and make adjustments to my exercise routine accordingly. The reminders to take my medication ensure that I never miss a dose, which is crucial for managing my condition. Overall, it's been a game-changer for me."

Survivor 3: "Using the ECG monitor gives me peace of mind when I feel symptoms coming on. It helps me decide if I need medical attention. Knowing that I can check my heart rate and rhythm at home reduces my anxiety and makes me feel more empowered. While I don't use it every day, it's an essential tool for those moments when I feel uncertain about my heart health. The peace of mind it provides is invaluable, and it has helped me avoid unnecessary panic and visits to the doctor."

Survivor 4: "The ECG monitor has been very effective in managing my condition. It allows me to detect any irregularities early and seek medical advice promptly. I recall an instance where I felt unusual palpitations and used the monitor to check my heart rate. The readings were abnormal, and I went to the hospital immediately, which helped prevent a potential stroke. Since using the monitor, I've become more vigilant about my health and have made lifestyle changes to reduce my risk."

Survivor 5: "I think these devices could be very beneficial in managing my health, but I haven't used them yet. From what I know, the real-time monitoring and immediate alerts could help in detecting issues early and preventing complications. If I start using

these devices, I expect they would help me feel more in control and informed about my health. However, I would need guidance on how to use them effectively to achieve these benefits."

Survivor 6: "My smartwatch has been very effective in helping me manage my condition. It tracks my heart rate, monitors my physical activity, and provides data that I can share with my doctor. This continuous monitoring has helped me make informed decisions about my health. For example, I noticed my heart rate was unusually high during a period of stress, and I was able to take measures to calm down and prevent any issues. The device has also motivated me to stay active and maintain a healthy lifestyle."

The responses show that those who use these devices report positive impacts, with three survivors finding them highly effective (Survivors 2, 4, 6) and one finding them moderately effective (Survivor 3). Two survivors who do not use the devices cannot comment on their effectiveness but believe they could be beneficial (Survivors 1, 5).

Cross-Cutting Theme: Barriers and Facilitators to Knowledge and Utilization

Challenges and support

Survivor 1: "I don't know how to use these devices, and they seem expensive. The initial cost is a big concern for me. Additionally, I'm worried about how to interpret the data they provide. What if I misinterpret something and either panic unnecessarily or ignore a serious issue? I would need a lot of guidance and support to start using these gadgets. If there were programs that provided training on how to use these devices and interpret their data, I might feel more confident about trying them."

Survivor 2: "I had support from my doctor and family to start using the smartwatch. It was initially a bit complex, but I got used to it. My doctor explained how to use the device, and my family helped me set it up and understand the features. Over time, using the smartwatch became second nature. The key was having that initial support to overcome the learning curve. Now, I can't imagine managing my health without it. Also, knowing that I have a backup in my family and healthcare provider if I ever run into issues gives me great peace of mind."

Survivor 3: "My main challenge is understanding all the features. Some training or guidance would help. I bought the ECG monitor on my doctor's recommendation, but there was no follow-up on how to use it effectively. I had to figure out most of it on my own, which was daunting. I think if there were more resources, like tutorials or support groups, it would be easier for people like me to use these devices to their full potential. Additionally, ongoing support from healthcare providers would be beneficial to ensure that we're using the devices correctly and effectively."

Survivor 4: "One of the biggest challenges I faced was the initial cost of the ECG monitor. It was a significant investment, but I felt it was worth it for my health. Learning to use the device was also challenging at first, but my healthcare provider offered some guidance, which made the process easier. Continuous support and regular check-ins from my doctor have been crucial in helping me use the device effectively."

Survivor 5: "The main challenges for me are cost and the complexity of the technology. These devices are expensive, and I'm not sure I can afford them. Additionally, I find the technology intimidating. There are so many features, and I'm not tech-savvy. I would need a lot of support to start using these devices effectively."

Having access to affordable options and comprehensive training programs would make a big difference."

Survivor 6: "The biggest challenge for me was initially understanding how to interpret the data from my smartwatch. It took some time to get used to the features and understand what the different metrics meant. However, with time and practice, I got the hang of it. Support from my family and regular consultations with my healthcare provider have been crucial. They helped me set up the device and provided guidance on how to use it effectively. Now, I feel much more confident and competent in using the smartwatch."

The responses highlight common barriers, including cost, technical complexity, and lack of training. Support from healthcare providers and family is a significant facilitator for effective utilization of these gadgets.

Statistical Analysis and Coding of Interview Responses

To analyze these responses statistically, the responses were coded using a Likert scale, frequencies and percentages.

Table 1: Knowledge of AI-Powered Smart Gadgets

Knowledge Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	3	50.00
Moderate	3	50.00
Low	0	0.00
Total	6	100.00

The knowledge levels are evenly distributed among the survivors, indicating good awareness and understanding of these technologies.

Table 2: Extent of Utilization

Utilization Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Regular	3	50.00
Occasional	1	16.67
None	2	33.33
Total	6	100.00

The utilization levels show that half of the survivors use the devices regularly, one uses them occasionally, and two do not use them at all. This suggests that while these gadgets are appreciated by those who use them, there is still a significant portion of the population that does not utilize them.

Table 3: Utilization Patterns

Utilization Pattern	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	2	33.33
Symptom-Based	1	16.67
Exercise-Based	1	16.67
None	2	33.33
Total	6	100.00

The utilization patterns show that two survivors use the devices daily, one uses them based on symptoms, one uses them primarily

during exercise, and two do not use them at all. This highlights different approaches to integrating technology into health management.

Table 4: Influence of Knowledge on Use

Influence Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	3	50.00
Moderate	1	16.67
Low	2	33.33
Total	6	100.00

The responses indicate that increased knowledge positively influences the decision to use these gadgets, as seen in three survivors (50.00%). One survivor (16.67%) has moderate influence, and two survivors (33.33%) show that lack of knowledge is a significant barrier to usage.

Table 5: Impact on Effective Stroke Management

Effectiveness Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	3	50.00
Moderate	1	16.67
None	2	33.33
Total	6	100.00

The responses show that those who use these devices report positive impacts, with three survivors finding them highly effective (50.00%) and one finding them moderately effective (16.67%). Two survivors who do not use the devices cannot comment on their effectiveness but believe they could be beneficial (33.33%).

Table 6: Barriers and Facilitators

Barrier/Facilitator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cost	3	50.00
Technical Complexity	4	66.67
Lack of Training	3	50.00
Support	3	50.00
Total	6	100.00

The responses highlight common barriers, including cost (50.00%), technical complexity (66.67%), and lack of training (50.00%). Support from healthcare providers and family is a significant facilitator for effective utilization of these gadgets (50.00%).

The analysis reveals diverse levels of knowledge and utilization of AI-powered smart gadgets among the six stroke survivors. Increased knowledge generally leads to higher utilization, and the devices are seen as beneficial by those who use them. Key barriers include cost, technical complexity, and the need for training and guidance. Support from healthcare providers and family plays a crucial role in facilitating the adoption and effective use of these technologies for stroke management. Addressing these barriers through education, financial support, and ongoing training could enhance the adoption and efficacy of AI-powered health monitoring tools.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the responses of questions posed under interview theme one suggest that the majority of participants possess a considerable degree of knowledge about AI-powered smartwatches and ECG gadgets. Survivors frequently highlighted features such as **continuous heart rate monitoring, detection of irregular heart rhythms, and syncing with health applications** as pivotal for stroke prevention. Knowledge sources included **advertisements, articles, physicians, and peer recommendations**, reflecting diverse channels of information acquisition. The responses are consistent with existing literature emphasizing the growing public awareness of wearable health technologies. A study by Martínez-Pérez et al. (2023) indicates that advancements in marketing and accessibility of health gadgets have improved general knowledge among users, particularly regarding their role in **early detection and management of cardiovascular risks**. However, barriers such as lack of personalized education were noted as constraints, which aligns with findings from Survivor 1 and Survivor 5, who expressed a need for more information and guidance to fully understand the technology.

Findings from the responses of questions posed under interview theme two indicates that utilization varied significantly among participants, ranging from **regular daily use** to **non-utilization**. Survivors 2, 4, and 6 actively used these gadgets, integrating them into their routines for **health monitoring and fitness tracking**, while Survivors 1 and 5 had not yet adopted them due to perceived barriers like cost, complexity, and lack of necessity. Research by Kumar et al. (2023) corroborates these findings, showing that usage rates of AI-powered health devices are influenced by factors such as **accessibility, perceived utility, and healthcare provider recommendations**. The disparities in utilization also reflect digital health inequities, a concern echoed by Reeder and David (2023), who argue that limited digital literacy and economic constraints often hinder the adoption of wearable health technologies.

Findings from the responses of questions posed under interview theme three suggests that patterns of use were diverse, with some participants fully integrating these devices into their daily lives (Survivors 2, 6), while others used them episodically (Survivors 3, 4) or not at all (Survivors 1, 5). Features such as **heart rate monitoring, step tracking, and sleep analysis** were commonly prioritized, underscoring the versatility of these devices in health management. Studies such as Anderson et al. (2022) highlight that regular users of smart health gadgets benefit more from their features, as frequent usage fosters **better health awareness and lifestyle adjustments**. This trend aligns with Survivor 2's and Survivor 6's practices of consistent monitoring and proactive health decisions. Conversely, episodic use, as reported by Survivor 3, aligns with findings that occasional users may not fully leverage these technologies due to lack of routine incorporation.

Findings from the responses of questions posed under interview theme four reveal a clear correlation between **knowledge** and **utilization**. Survivors with higher knowledge (Survivors 2, 4, 6) were more likely to use these gadgets regularly, while those with moderate or limited knowledge (Survivors 1, 3, 5) exhibited lower levels of usage or interest. Knowledge facilitated confidence in using the devices effectively, while gaps in understanding created barriers. This is supported by McGrath et al. (2022), who noted that **health literacy and tailored education** play critical roles in the adoption of wearable health technologies. Participants with

access to professional guidance (e.g., Survivor 4 receiving advice from a healthcare provider) were better equipped to integrate these tools into their health management routines.

Findings from the responses of questions posed under interview theme five show that participants who actively used these gadgets (Survivors 2, 4, 6) reported significant benefits in managing stroke risks. These included **early detection of irregularities, improved health awareness, and lifestyle adjustments**. Survivors 3 and 5, while less frequent users, acknowledged the potential benefits of these devices in stroke prevention. Non-users (Survivor 1, 5) expressed optimism about their utility but cited barriers to adoption. Supporting literature, such as Wu et al. (2023), confirms the effectiveness of AI-powered health monitoring in improving outcomes for patients at risk of strokes and other cardiovascular issues. The **real-time feedback and data-driven insights** provided by these gadgets enhance self-management and empower users to seek timely medical interventions, as exemplified by Survivor 4's account of preventing a potential stroke. Ezeaka (2024) opines that AI holds great promise for improving health communication noting that AI can analyse large amounts of data to spot trends in public health, tailor health messages to particular groups, and predict disease outbreaks.

Findings from the responses of questions posed under interview theme six reveal that participants identified **cost, complexity, and lack of guidance** as major barriers to adopting and utilizing AI-powered health gadgets. Survivors 2, 4, and 6 overcame these challenges through **support from healthcare providers and family members**, highlighting the importance of **initial guidance and ongoing support** in facilitating adoption. These findings align with research by Ezeaka, Ochuba & Bartholomew (2025) who argue that Individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds often struggle to afford healthcare services, leading to delayed or inadequate treatment. High out-of-pocket expenses, coupled with limited health insurance coverage, prevent many Nigerians from seeking necessary medical attention. Also, Lee et al. (2022), emphasize the role of **affordable pricing, user-friendly designs, and educational programs** in mitigating barriers to technology adoption. Programs that provide **training on device usage and data interpretation** were particularly recommended to improve accessibility and user confidence; a sentiment echoed by several survivors.

Conclusion

The study on the dynamics of adoption and usage of AI-powered smart gadgets for stroke management among survivors in Southeast Nigeria reveals critical insights into the interplay between knowledge, usage, and the perceived benefits of these technologies. High knowledge levels of AI-powered smartwatches and ECG gadgets correlate strongly with consistent usage, underscoring the vital role of awareness in the adoption process. Regular users, benefiting from real-time monitoring and data-sharing capabilities, have integrated these devices into their daily routines, significantly enhancing their stroke prevention and health management efforts. Conversely, non-users and occasional users highlight significant barriers such as high costs, lack of awareness, and the absence of healthcare recommendations, which impede broader adoption. These findings suggest that targeted strategies focused on increasing awareness, providing healthcare support, and improving affordability can facilitate greater adoption and usage of AI-powered smart gadgets among stroke survivors in the region. Addressing these barriers through education and support will be

essential in leveraging the full potential of these technologies to improve health outcomes and quality of life for stroke survivors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study on the adoption and usage of AI-powered smart gadgets for stroke management among survivors in Southeast Nigeria, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Conduct comprehensive educational campaigns to raise awareness about the benefits and functionalities of AI-powered smart gadgets. This can be done through healthcare providers, community health programs, and online platforms.
2. Encourage healthcare providers to actively recommend and integrate AI-powered smart gadgets into stroke management plans. This could include regular check-ups, monitoring, and follow-up consultations using data from these devices.
3. Provide multilingual instructions and support materials to cater to diverse populations within the region.
4. Create support groups and community forums where stroke survivors can share experiences, tips, and success stories about using AI-powered smart gadgets. This can help build a sense of community and encourage wider adoption.

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