EP043

BRIDGING THE GENOMIC LITERACY GAP : A PROPOSED BEHAVIOURALLY-INFORMED INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO GENETIC COUNSELLING IN MALAYSIA



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Introduction

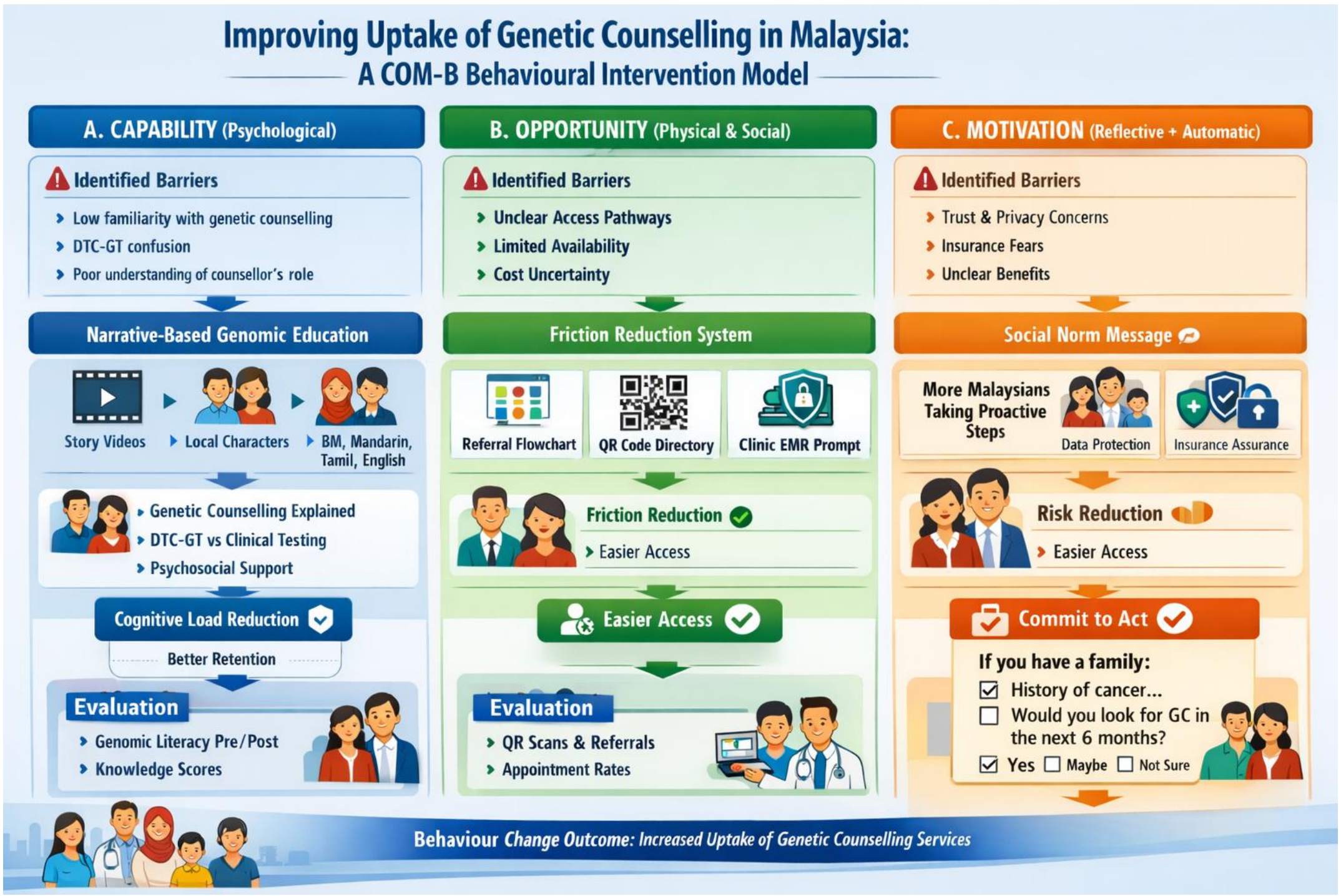
- Public awareness of genetic counselling and direct-to-consumer genetic testing (DTC-GT) in Malaysia remains limited, with notable gaps in knowledge and uncertainty regarding access pathways.
- A community-based survey in Penang revealed low familiarity with genetic counselling (69%) and DTC-GT (70%), poor understanding of counsellors' psychosocial roles, and perceived barriers such as cost, limited service availability, and insurance concerns.
- These findings suggest that behavioural factors, rather than purely structural constraints, play a key role in limiting engagement with genomic healthcare.

Objectives and Methodology

To design and evaluate a behavioural science informed intervention grounded in the COM-B model (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation–Behaviour) aimed at :

Primary Behavioural Outcomes
Intention to seek genetic counselling when relevant (e.g., family history, abnormal screening result)
Actual uptake (appointment booking or enquiry)

Secondary Outcomes
Improved genomic literacy
Reduced perceived barriers
Increased trust in data governance



Discussion and Conclusion

- ❑ A theory-driven behavioural intervention can address key barriers to genomic healthcare engagement in Malaysia, enabling more informed and proactive use of genetic services.
- ❑ Enhancing awareness, understanding, accessibility, and trust in genetic counselling increases individuals' intention to seek care while reducing perceived barriers.
- ❑ This, in turn, builds confidence in navigating referral pathways and accessing services.
- ❑ Ultimately, it leads to higher uptake, earlier detection of genetic conditions, and stronger public engagement with genomic healthcare.
- ❑ The intervention can be delivered through a multi-component community-based programme, piloted in Penang and scalable nationwide.

References

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