



## AB202. 238. Review of communication methods in a vascular surgery clinic

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**Background:** Communication is key to any successful relationship with the patient-physician partnership being no different. Recent advances in technology have provided us with an array of new communication tools such as the mobile phone, the computer, the internet and email. This new technology has revolutionised communications, however, limitations to their widespread use include access, literacy and willingness for both the physician and patient to change.

**Methods:** Following ethics approval, questionnaires were handed out to patients attending vascular surgery outpatient clinics at University Hospital Limerick from July to August 2017. Number of patients attending; those failing to attend; and those not fully completing the documentation were recorded.

**Results:** Three hundred and thirty-six questionnaires were completed by patients attending 19 vascular clinics over

a 6-week period during July and August 2017, there were 522 scheduled appointments of which 78 failed to attend. Forty-five patients (or relatives on their behalf) declined to take part, of these 8-cited illiteracy and 12 dementia. Mean age was 61.6 yrs with range 21–92 yrs. The 72.6% of patients were over the age of 55 years. The 56.5% of patients selected post as a preferred method of communication and this increased with increasing age. The 93.7% of patients, overall, had a mobile phone but just 66.4% use text message. Only 44.2% of patients over 65 use text messages, 23.0% use email, 27.9% have a computer and 45.5% have access to the internet with decreasing use with increasing age.

**Conclusions:** Within this patient population, the use of technologies decreases with increasing age of the patients. This demonstrates a large population of service users who are content with conventional methods of communication. Change within healthcare ICT is inevitable and therefore, these patients need to be guided and educated to allow a smooth transition from the old to the new.

**Keywords:** Communications; method; vascular; clinic

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