

AB033. SOH21AS156. Virtual phone call or video consultations: patient and clinician preference during COVID-19

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Background: In response to COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines, healthcare services have evolved. Telehealth has been a part of this change and many services have introduced virtual telephone clinics. The HSE recently approved a video conferencing tool, 'Attend Anywhere', and although available it is not widely used. We have received positive feedback from patients, but only a few studies provide information on patient and clinician satisfaction of virtual consultations. We aim to validate this by assessing preferences towards virtual telephone and video consultations.

Methods: Fifty patients from the breast care clinic were included. Exclusion criteria were any new or symptomatic patients or those with a physical/intellectual incapacity. A Likert scale questionnaire was used to assess patient and clinician attitude towards 'phone' (PC) or 'video' consultations (VC).

Results: The majority of patients (64%) requested a PC rather than a VC (36%). More patients used technology regularly in the VC group (88%) than the PC group (69%), and 94% of VC patients had experience with video calls (47% PC). VC patients felt safe using 'Attend Anywhere' (94%), said it was 'more personal' than a phone call (72%) but preferred face-to-face for future consultations as they 'liked the reassurance of a physical exam' (78% VC; 59% PC). All clinicians felt the lack of examination in virtual

clinics impacts the doctor-patient relationship and would prefer face-to-face consultations where possible.

Conclusions: Our findings demonstrate a positive patient and clinician attitude to virtual clinics, however face-to-face appointments are preferred by both groups. We will repeat this survey following COVID-19 restrictions to determine if attitudes have changed.

Keywords: Telemedicine; virtual clinic; video; COVID-19; satisfaction

Acknowledgments

Funding: None.

Footnote

Conflicts of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Ethical Statement: The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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doi: 10.21037/map-21-ab033

Cite this abstract as: Kinsella A, Hassan I, Malone C. Virtual phone call or video consultations: patient and clinician preference during COVID-19. *Mesentery Peritoneum* 2021;5:AB033.