

AB209. SOH21AS011. Rapid implementation of virtual hand therapy clinics due to COVID-19-report and early evaluation of functional outcomes and patient satisfaction

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Background: The COVID-19 pandemic led to the introduction of movement restrictions and the concept of social distancing in Ireland, beginning suddenly on March 12th 2020. Following this, virtual consultation via video-call has been identified and integrated as an alternative to in-person consultation. To follow national recommendations and reduce the potential risk to patients attending hospital, video consultations were rapidly integrated by the hand therapy team at University Hospital Galway. This service provides a service to 730,513 across eight counties and was utilised for a range of upper limb injuries, providing vital care to trauma patients post-operatively and to minor injury cases. We wanted to retrospectively assess the implementation of these virtual clinics and how it affected patients.

Methods: Patients were offered virtual hand therapy appointments. Patients were emailed a link with their appointment time and date. The patient could decline the option of a virtual appointment at this stage. Patient satisfaction was measured via a bespoke survey. Functional outcomes were assessed via the QuickDash assessment tool.

Results: Response: 44/74 (59.5%) of patients responded to the survey. Subjectively, the vast majority of patients

found the service user-friendly, convenient and beneficial. Objectively, the QuickDash score demonstrated low disability and high upper limb function return post injury.

Conclusions: Implementation of virtual hand therapy was integrated successfully. Patient satisfaction was generally very high. As well as its associated economic and environmental benefits, the possible long-term future consequences of COVID-19 looms and as social-distancing becomes the norm, virtual health support services continue to provide essential patient care.

Keywords: Trauma; upper limb; COVID-19; telehealth

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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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