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How GP practices are using video consultations

Three case studies highlight how practices are using video consultations to improve patient care and deliver cost savings.



GPs pilot the use of Skype with patients

GPs at Cavendish Health Centre in London piloted the use of Skype consultations with patients, with 95% of patients involved saying they 'would use it again'.

Ninety-four per cent reported that they were satisfied or gave a better rating that the consultation had met their medical needs and 78% were satisfied with how long they waited for the appointment.

NHS Central London CCG found that a broad mix of patients had used the service including working people and parents of young children. Two-thirds of patients joined the remote consultations from home but more than a quarter – 28% – Skyped from their workplaces.

Dr Alice Fraser, the lead GP at the pilot practice, said: 'The flexibility that remote working offers means clinicians can make more efficient and productive use of time ... Our patients with mobility or transport problems could get a more detailed consultation via Skype than a telephone conversation might allow, so this service proved especially useful for them.'

- [How to set up a Skype service in your practice](#)

Video consultation links to patients in own homes and local care homes

Stoke-on-Trent CCG is piloting the use of GP to patient interactions using video consultation via Skype. This project runs alongside a separate use of video technology (with v-connect) linking GP practices to care homes.

The use of Skype is seen as a low-cost but effective method of engaging with hard to reach patients or those who find it difficult to get to the practice and who may be prone to not attending or late cancellations.

The project has involved enabling designated practice PCs to access Skype as well as training for staff to use it.

A clear protocol is in place around the process of contacting the patient, and consent forms are distributed and signed beforehand. There are 10 practices on the pilot and each one is allowed to decide which patient group is best for them.

Some examples include using Skype to link with patients with a long-term condition who are also using self-monitoring equipment. This allows the clinician to ensure the equipment is being used properly as well as ensuring the patient does not have to visit the practice.

Other uses include weight management clinics for people with children who may find childcare an issue if they have to visit the practice as well as asthma reviews with teenage patients.

Some practices are exploring using Skype to feed back test results for those patients who do not want to come into the practice but feel that the use of telephone is too impersonal.

Skin cancer diagnosis

Doncaster CCG has worked with a mobile technology company to create the 4GEE service that focuses on skin cancer diagnoses.

GPs can connect a microscope to their own smartphones to take a detailed picture of the suspect skin lesion and email this to the associated skin specialists. The dermatologist team sends back the diagnosis promptly – within an average 48 hours - saving an estimated £70 a patient who would otherwise have been referred to the hospital outpatient department for a face-to-face consultation.



These case studies are taken from a new book *Digital Healthcare: The Essential Guide* by Dr Ruth Chambers, Marc Schmid and Jayne Birch-Jones, priced £24.99 and published by Otmoor Publishing.

Medeconomics users can buy the book for the reduced price of £19.99 by emailing stephen.bonner@otmoorpublishing.com and requesting the book and quoting 'Medeconomics offer'.

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