

Martora Fabrizio (Orcid ID: 0000-0003-2523-050X)
Ruggiero Angelo (Orcid ID: 0000-0002-4658-7391)
Villani Alessia (Orcid ID: 0000-0001-6430-268X)

**Patients' satisfaction with remote dermatology consultations during Covid-19 pandemic.
Response to "A qualitative assessment of patient satisfaction with remote dermatology
consultations utilised during the UK's first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in a single
secondary care Dermatology department"**

Fabrizio Martora, Angelo Ruggiero, Gabriella Fabbrocini and Alessia Villani

Dermatology Unit, Department of Clinical Medicine and Surgery, University of Naples Federico II,
Naples, Italy.

Corresponding author: Dr Fabrizio Martora

Email: fabrizio.martora92@libero.it

Funding: None

Conflicts of interest: None to declare

Data availability statement: Data are on request by corresponding author

Ethics statement: Patient's gave the consent for photo acquisition and publication

Dear Editor,

With the spreading of Covid-19 pandemic face-to-face visits were postponed and replaced with telemedicine in order to avoid viral transmission, except for emergencies and oncologic consultations.

We read with great interest the article entitled: "A qualitative assessment of patient satisfaction with remote dermatology consultations utilized during the UK's first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in a single secondary care Dermatology department" written by Amy Livesey et al¹ and we also want to report the experience of our dermatologic center. The authors conducted a retrospective survey based on a randomized sample of patients, using teledermatologic services, that were asked to complete an online questionnaire (SmartSurvey, 2020)¹ in order to evaluate their grade of satisfaction. The accurate evaluation of patients' perceptions of teledermatology appointments and their grade of

This article has been accepted for publication and undergone full peer review but has not been through the copyediting, typesetting, pagination and proofreading process which may lead to differences between this version and the [Version of Record](#). Please cite this article as doi: [10.1111/ced.15326](https://doi.org/10.1111/ced.15326)

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satisfaction revealed some potential for its future use in daily clinical practice, but highlighted the need for some developments and improvements for its implementation¹. As the authors point out, tele dermatology has been one of the most successful tools used during COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring the continuity of visits, in particular for chronic skin diseases requiring periodic follow-up, and reducing the risk of infection^{2,3}. From the beginning of the pandemic period we also expanded our tele dermatology service^{4,5}, increasing the number of tele visits and the type of services available as video visitation, telephone visits, and e-mail support to patients. 323 patients (175 males and 148 females; median age: 39.8 years) were contacted via phone-calls and were asked to complete a brief survey about their grade of satisfaction regarding remote consultations (through phone or video calls), whether they would prefer to continue telemedicine visits in the future, what doubts they had about the use of telemedicine, and whether they considered telemedicine visit as satisfactory as face-to-face visits.

Interesting data were mainly found in young patients suffering from chronic skin conditions as acne, hidradenitis suppurativa, psoriasis and atopic dermatitis; almost all young patients (187/323; 58.2%) positively answered to the questions regarding the satisfaction rate and the possibility of considering telemedicine for the future; no patient showed any problems in sharing photos or videos during tele visits. In contrast, patients aged > 60 years did not show a strong satisfaction rate; in fact, the analysis of their answers revealed two main reasons: the low use of technology and the consequent difficulty in sharing photos or videos of themselves. Nevertheless, according to our results, tele dermatology played a central role during Covid-19 pandemic, thus allowing to have a continuity for patients who needed frequent follow-up visits; however, significant concerns regarding telemedicine use still remain: first of all, the problem of privacy in particular the lack of an official and widely accepted form of informed consent during visits (medico-legal issues). Therefore, new official guidelines and recommendations are necessary so that this service can be globalized and improved in order to ensure the safety of visits for both patients and dermatologist. Further studies

on larger cohorts of patients, evaluating the long-term results of teledermatology and patients' grade of satisfaction are still required.

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