

Do patients prefer face-to-face or telephone consultations in an outpatient cardiology department?

C. Goode, R. Manorekang, N. Durham

The York Hospital, York, United Kingdom

Funding Acknowledgement: Type of funding sources: None.

Introduction: There has been a significant rise in the telephone clinic consultations in preference to face-to-face (FTF) clinics in the UK during the COVID 19 pandemic. The cardiology department in a district general hospital has also seen increased use of telephone clinics. We wanted a greater understanding of the impact of telephone consultations on patient satisfaction.

Methods: A patient satisfaction survey was designed based on the joint Royal College of Physicians training board (JRCPTB) patient satisfaction survey. The survey (Image 1) was sent via post to 300 patients reviewed by the cardiology outpatient department during November 2021. 150 who had telephone appointments and to 150 patients who had FTF appointments. Descriptive statistics and student T test were used to compare differences between the two groups with a p value of <0.05.

Results: There were 171 responses returned over a four-week period giving a 57% response rate. Of these, 75 respondents had a telephone appointment and 96 who had FTF appointments. 49% of the FTF patients were male compared to 55% of the telephone clinic respondents. The ma-

majority of patients were aged 70–89 in both groups and most patients were retired (79.2% for FTF and 65.3% on the telephone consultation group).

More patients felt the doctor was polite and considerate in FTF clinics compared to telephone consultation (97% compared to 92% positive responses, p value – 0.02). There was no significant difference in patients feeling listened too, being allowed time to ask questions, understanding their condition and being involved in decision making between the two groups (Table 1).

Of the FTF group, 81% preferred FTF clinics with only 3% preferring telephone clinics and 16% with no preference. Of the telephone group 53% stated a preference for FTF clinics, with 11% having a preference for phone clinics and 36% having no preference.

Patients rated overall experience more positively with FTF appointments (95%) compared to telephone clinics (85%, p value 0.02).

Conclusion: Telephone consultations performed at a comparable level to FTF clinics although patients demonstrate an overall preference for FTF clinics.

Cardiology Outpatient Clinic - Patient Satisfaction Survey

Please note all responses are anonymous. Please circle your answers.

1. I felt that the doctor was polite and considerate during the consultation.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	---------	-------	----------------

2. I felt listened to and was allowed time to ask questions.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	---------	-------	----------------

3. I feel better able to understand and manage my condition after the consultation.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	---------	-------	----------------

4. I felt involved in the decisions about my condition and treatment.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	---------	-------	----------------

5. Which type of consultation did you have on your last appointment?

Face-to-face	Telephone
--------------	-----------

6. Would you prefer face-to-face or telephone consultation?

Face-to-face	Telephone	No Preference
--------------	-----------	---------------

7. What is your age?

17-29 years	30-49 years	50-69 years	70-89 years	>90 years
-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	-----------

8. Gender:

Male	Female	Other (Please specify):
------	--------	-------------------------

9. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

Employed, working 1-39 hours per week (including self-employed)
Employed, working 40 or more hours per week (including self-employed)
Not employed, looking for work
Not employed, not looking for work
Retired

10. Overall what would you rate your cardiology appointment experience?

Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
------------------	-------------	---------	-----------	----------------

Image 1

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	p value
Question 1	FTF	0%	1%	2%	31%	66%	0.02
	Telephone	1%	0%	7%	41%	51%	
Question 2	FTF	1%	0%	5%	41%	53%	0.12
	Telephone	1%	1%	12%	36%	49%	
Question 3	FTF	0%	5%	19%	48%	28%	0.47
	Telephone	1%	8%	17%	36%	37%	
Question 4	FTF	0%	3%	17%	48%	32%	0.5
	Telephone	1%	8%	12%	37%	41%	

Table 1