



# A service evaluation of video consultations in a UK hospice during the COVID-19 pandemic: learning from patients' and carers' feedback

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## Introduction

During the Covid-19 pandemic, our hospice services rapidly shifted to consulting using videoconferencing technology. A service evaluation captured our patients' experiences of video consultations provided by a range of hospice professionals.

## Key findings

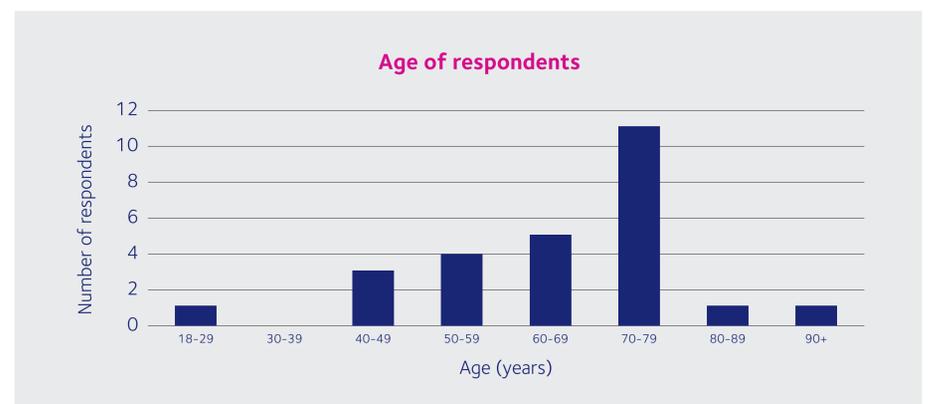
We received 23 responses from patients and 3 responses from family members/ carers who had consulted with hospice professionals from March to June 2020.

Respondents had consulted with our doctors (2), nurses (14), physiotherapists (5), occupational therapists (1), social workers (1), complementary therapists (4) and members of our Wellbeing team (17).

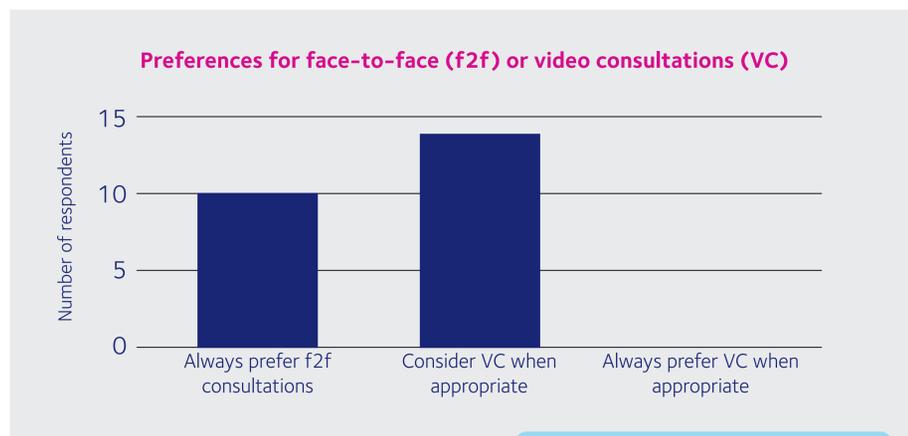
- 22 respondents experienced being able to talk in the same way as if they were face-to-face.
- 17 stated they would prefer video consultations over telephone consultations.
- All respondents reported overall satisfaction with consulting via video, although 10 respondents still stated a preference for face-to-face consultations where possible.
- 22 respondents said they would be happy to use video to consult with hospice professionals in the future.
- 21 stated that they would recommend this service to others.

## Methods

An online or postal survey was sent to a convenience sample of patients, who had participated in video consultations between March and June 2020, focussing on their experience and overall satisfaction with the service.



- 25 respondents stated they used the internet daily
- 22 had access to a smartphone
- 23 had used videoconferencing for reasons other than healthcare
- 22 had never used video technology for healthcare purposes prior to the pandemic
- 22 rated their IT skills as average or above



"My wife found it helpful to explain some of my difficulties and helped me to remember what was said." (patient)

"I am unable to speak so my husband was my voice." (patient with MND)

"My wife attended the first Zoom session which was good because we both met the nurse for the first time and understood the objectives of the sessions and the palliative role as a whole." (patient referred to hospice during COVID-19 pandemic)

"Daughter (joined in) once... for relaxation. Nice to do together." (patient attending Wellbeing session)

"...had never heard of Zoom® or how to use it, but it is so easy." (patient)

Surprisingly, none of the respondents stated that they had any problems with using the videoconferencing technology.

8 respondents had included a family member in their consultation and this was viewed as beneficial

19 respondents stated there were circumstances when video consultations would be less appropriate, for example: urgent situations, when a face to face is required (e.g wound check) in times of serious upset

## Conclusions

Patients and carers reported video consultations to be an acceptable way to receive support from a range of hospice professionals. The majority had access to, and familiarity with their own technology. Video consultations should be offered as an alternative to face-to-face consultations when appropriate with the potential to improve access for more patients and carers to a range of hospice services in the future.

