

Secondary Research Report on Patient Care in GP Surgeries and Hospitals during COVID-19

Module: Digital Skills and Research Methods

BMSW4003

Task 2: Research Report (2000 words)

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1. Abstract

The proposed secondary research report is to show what are the students of UWTSD feelings are within the healthcare system during COVID-19. A questionnaire was created with ten questions to be answered by students at the London campus. The students were asked to complete these online questions to provide their views on patient care in GP surgeries and hospitals during COVID-19. Their views have identified their ease on online bookings/ordering medication and waiting times. The findings of this research are summarised and shown with bar charts and pie charts. It was found that students of UWTSD would like to continue with online bookings and e-consults even when COVID-19 pandemic ends. However, students found ordering medication online to be a challenge.

2. Introduction

e-consult allows NHS-based GP surgeries to provide their patients with online consultations. Therefore, allows people to send their symptoms or requests to their GPs electronically. It also provides NHS self-help material, symptom checker 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The goal is to increase practices efficiency and directing patients to the appropriate place for treatment. (eConsult, 2021). The e-Consult system can provide individual treatment advice from trained primary care pharmacists and primary care providers. Nishiguchi et al (2021). This secondary research report aims to show students at UWTSD London campus their feelings and thoughts of their experiences within their GP surgeries/hospitals during COVID-19. Furthermore, a questionnaire was created in this report it will show the data gathered.

3. Rationale

I will be conducting my report based on secondary data within the healthcare sector. I will be collecting information relevant to patients of GP surgeries and hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic as I would like to work in this field in the future. I believe collecting data equates to a better understanding of patients' needs and thoughts from online bookings to waiting times in the healthcare.

4. Research Objectives

This data report will entail a secondary data research on different findings this may include the number of patients who found with or without ease to access online bookings, to ordering prescriptions and waiting times.

Secondary data is generally gained from first-hand sources through questionnaire's, observations, focus groups or in-depth interviews. Allen, (2017). Researchers gather, verify, analyse, and incorporate secondary research to assist them to corroborate study goals for their research period. Qualtrics. (n.d.).

The purpose of this secondary research report is:

- To found out students at UWTSD experiences with their GP surgeries and hospitals with online bookings and e-consults
- To understand students' feelings using these methods

I conducted this research report by creating a questionnaire using Microsoft forms as a data collecting method. I then used the responses from class to create this report.

5. Literature Review

As covid-19 made an appearance all around the world was forced to go into lockdown to prevent the spread of the virus. Hospitals, doctor surgeries and pharmacists implemented a complete telephone triaging model, which allowed healthcare professionals to treat more of their patients through telephone and video consultations. Therefore, reducing the numbers of face-to-face consultations and home visits. Since the amount of calls was unsustainable, those within the healthcare sector looked at alternative options to stay connected with their patients such as email and e-consults an online triage consultation tool. Although, this would be much harder for the people with medical problems such as the blind and those who cannot access internet. Online sources show advantages and disadvantages of e-Consult online consultations and the use on NHS app. Many health professionals have had to learn fast in a short period time using this method with some professionals not trained enough.

Hospitals went into crisis over a two-year period with COVID-19 causing major chaos in the healthcare system. Urgent and non-urgent hospital appointments was forced to be delayed as more patients tested positive to this virus therefore, needing hospital care. According to Khan, et al (2021). NHS hospitals were advised to suspend all non-urgent elective surgery to increase bed capacity and to free up theatre ventilators to be used for acutely unwell COVID-19 patients.

The NHS App became more popular with patients and those who have access to internet and a smartphone during the pandemic, patients are able to check symptoms, book appointments, order repeat prescriptions even access their own medical records online. From here the healthcare system was transformed massively. (Armstrong, 2021) stated adopting digital to triaging and consulting at a rate that would have been unthinkable just a few months before. Armstrong, (2021). also states that face-to face online GP appointments became out of date in matter of overnight.

Some patients might find using e-Consult system a challenge. Certain patients feel digitally disconnected/excluded, particularly if they have hearing or vision issues or those with mental health conditions. Furthermore, people unable to communicate effectively in English. According to Baptiste, (2021). There's a worry that because of their socioeconomic disadvantages some patients won't have access to smartphones, tablets, or laptops.

e-Consults/telehealth offers to deliver virtual care to patients worldwide remotely without, direct physical contact between the patients and GPs therefore, reducing appointment waiting times which is essential during the world's pandemic. According to Elhassan et al (N.D). "There are still some complex challenges to establish wide virtual consultation services within different routine practices in many sectors".

However, some patients have been avoiding e-Consult consultations with their GPs resulting in increased ambulance calls. According to Gray et al (2021). The number of ambulance callouts with treatment at the scene rather than transport to hospital has increased. Therefore, having fewer callers and a reduction in GP appointments, despite uses of telehealth.

Meanwhile, doctors and those working in the healthcare sector had to learn to adapt to remote consultations rather quickly. Hoskin et al (2021) states the overnight move into remote consultations was a challenging for both her and the PAs at her surgery. Hoskin et al (2021.) also noted PAs don't have enough primary care experience in managing a patient remotely.

According to Mathews et al (2021). A survey showed patients felt that the main advantages of online consultations included a lower risk of infections and reduced waiting times. The main disadvantages were lack of physical examinations and not as satisfying as face-to-face consultations.

6. Methodology

In this research I will search different sources these may include government websites, and other sites in addition to data collected from GP surgeries, hospitals which may contain newspaper or newsletter articles alongside other methods. This report will show this in the form of charts and reports based on a questionnaire I created for a survey.

The research report will show the ten questions from the questionnaire I created for my class at, London campus to complete. I got thirteen responses from students in my class. Therefore, I will use these responses in this report.

7. Analysis and discussions

The purpose of this questionnaire was to gather data from UWTSD students in my class to understand their views on the NHS e-Consult consultations online and their ease using the NHS app. Below will show some questions I asked in the questionnaire with their answers.

These questions were answered by 92% of women and 8% of men. 54% of the class are aged between 25-40 whereas, 15% of the class are aged between 18-25 and the other 31% of the students are aged 40+.

8. Questions analysis

The following questions were asked:

Question .1

Doctor surgeries introduced online bookings and e-consults which many patients relied on during COVID-19 pandemic. How likely will you continue with this option once things get back to normal?

This questionnaire gave options of:

- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely

This bar shows that 30.8% students of London campus will continue to implement this method once the COVID-19 pandemic is over. 15.4% of the class was unsure whereas 15.4% of the students will not continue to use online bookings and e-consults.

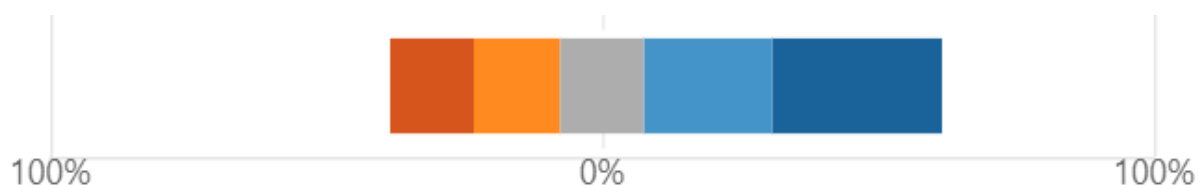


Figure 1

Question .2

On this second question I conducted a rating question from 1-5 this is how the class responded.

How accessible did you find booking appointments online?

24% of my class gave a high rating of 4-5. This information shows they found booking appointments online was relevantly easy.

Question .3

With lockdown causing DR surgeries to close their doors how, easy was it to get through to receptionists via telephone?



Figure 2

This pie chart shows 46% of the class found it neutral to contact doctor surgeries by telephone during COVID-19 pandemic. However, 8% of the class answered not easy.

Question .4

In question 4 the questionnaire asked;

On a scale of 1-10 how satisfied or dissatisfied do you feel using this service?

Participants were able to respond using a scale of 1-10.

- 1-5 dissatisfied
- 5-10 satisfied

In this question 23% of the class rated between 8-10. Showing they are satisfied with using this tool.

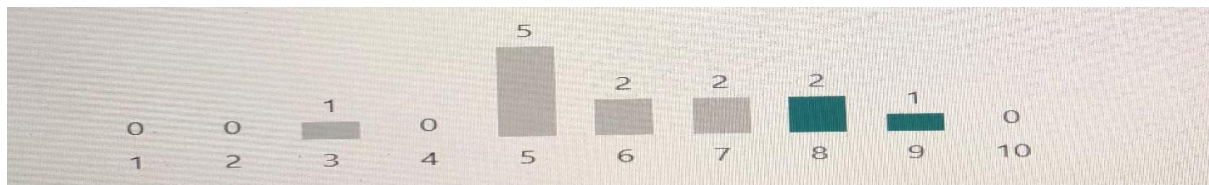


Figure 3

Question 5

For this question I asked.

How do you find ordering medication via online?



Figure 4

The pie chart above shows a mixture of opinions from students in my class. 38% said they found ordering medication online satisfactory whereas 31% say it was easy for them. On the other hand, the other 31% found it hard using this method.

Question 6

In this question the questionnaire asked the class.

Hospitals cancelled urgent treatments such as radiotherapy due to the strain on the NHS because of Covid-19. Do you feel this could have been managed better?



Figure 5

The response for this question shows 85% of the class do feel that hospital treatments such as radiotherapy and other urgent and non-urgent treatments could have been dealt with much better during COVID-19 pandemic. However only 8% replied no and the other 8% of the class responded maybe.

9. Recommendations

e-Consults, online consultations and telemedicine's should provide enough training to doctors and other healthcare professionals better to manage primary care to their patients remotely online. Furthermore, there should be better information and help for those that find using this system a challenge particularly, the patients that have hearing or vision issues and those that are unable to communicate effectively in English.

10. conclusions

e-Consults and NHS apps have been very effective amongst patients, and those working in the healthcare sector even more so during COVID-19 pandemic. Conducting this research report has helped me understand students at London campus views on patient care in GP surgeries and hospitals during COVID-19.

This secondary research report explored the use of online GP consultations through journals and articles across the internet and through data collected and views of my UWTSD classmates who had completed a questionnaire I created on Microsoft forms.

A majority of my class have reported to be happy with their experiences using the online e-Consults for GP appointments and would very likely use this system in the future. However, some say requesting medication online could somewhat be better.

Therefore, in conclusion for a vast majority of patients this pandemic has given a great opportunity to virtual consultations, e-Consults, telemedicine, and NHS apps to seek medical care. However, the high satisfaction of patients and healthcare professionals for online consultations suggests that this way forward could be increasingly popular in this world even when restrictions of COVID-19 pandemic is over.

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Appendix

Here are the remaining questions from the questionnaire I created in Microsoft forms. These few questions left I didn't find relevant to this secondary research report so therefore, placed them in the appendix.

Question 7

For this question I asked.

If you had visited A&E department during the pandemic how long was waiting time?

The pie chart below shows 23% of the class at London campus UWTSD waited 30-60 minutes in accident and emergency department. Whereas 15% of the class waiting time was between 10-30 minutes and the remaining 62% answered other.



Figure 6

Question 8

The questionnaire asked about their gender the survey shows.

92% are women and only 8% are men.

Question 9

For this question I asked what is your age?

54% are aged between 25-40

31% are aged 40+ and 15% of the class are aged between 18.25.



Figure 7