

1691 Survey of Patient Attitudes Towards Face-To-Face and Telemedicine Teaching in the COVID-19 Era

L. Coady^{1,2}, A. Charturvedi¹, N. Fearon², H. Heneghan^{1,2},
E. Carrington^{1,2,3}

¹Department of Surgery, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland, ²Surgical Professorial Unit, St Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland, ³Department of Surgery & Cancer, Faculty of Medicine, Imperial College, London, United Kingdom

Background: COVID-19 has profoundly impacted the healthcare education environment and telemedicine has been used to augment face-to-face learning and support social-distancing. There is little evidence which examines how patients feel about participating in teaching with this technology.

Method: A prospective survey of 229 surgical inpatients/outpatients was conducted at a university hospital between August–September 2020. The survey consisted of 31 questions (7-point Likert scales, quantitative items, and free-text answers) to explore: general attitudes towards teaching, attitudes towards COVID-19, perceptions of face-to-face teaching and perceptions of telemedicine teaching. Relationships between demographics and areas of interest were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively.

Results: Patients reported a positive attitude towards both face-to-face (mean 5.5 [1.1SD]) and telemedicine teaching (5.4 [1.2]) however there was a preference for the face-to-face approach (mean difference [MD]=.16, $p=0.14$). Face-to-face teaching was found to be less bothersome (MD=.32, $p=.002$) and more rewarding (MD.33, $p<.001$). Older patients were more likely to report both teaching techniques as embarrassing (face-to-face $r=.16$, $p=.048$; telemedicine $r=.15$, $p=.036$) or as an infringement on their privacy (face-to-face $r=.13$, $p=.048$; telemedicine $r=.17$, $p=.017$). Qualitative analyses revealed four themes of the patient experience: apprentice role of students, communication skills, transient need for telemedicine during COVID-19 and privacy concerns.

Conclusions: Despite reporting a favourable impression of telemedicine teaching, patients prefer traditional face-to-face styles as they find telemedicine more bothersome and less rewarding. Educators should take this into consideration during planning of teaching during the pandemic.