International Guidelines[1] recommend that face to face clinics (FTF) should be converted to tele-consultations where possible in the context of COVID 19. The rapid establishment of virtual clinics (VC) has been hugely impactful with several barriers to implementation emerging. We highlighted the pitfalls of this new way of delivering care and quantified the additional burden on dermatology resources.

**Aim:** Quantify the additional burden on dermatology services generated by VC compared to pre covid FTF clinics. Highlight obstacles to the delivery of VCs

**Methods**

Quantitative real time study on 47 review patients participating in virtual consultations between July and August 2020 using specifically designed proforma (see Figure 1).

**Results**

### Demographics: Forty-seven patients with equal gender balance and a mean age of 51 were included (Table 1). Diagnostic Categories are outlined (Figure 2).

| Table 1. Demographics and Clinical Characteristics |
|----------------|----------------|
| Sex | Female | 23 | Male | 24 |
| Age, years | Range | 1 - 102 | Mean | 51 |

#### Figure 2. Diagnosis

- **Inflammatory Dermatosis:** 38% (n=18)
- **Lesions:** 62% (n=29)

#### Virtual Consultations

- Mean interval since last FTF was 30 (±11.4) weeks.
- For 51% (n=24) this was their first virtual consultation.
- Mean duration virtual consultation was 21.3 (±9.5) min.
- Mean duration of pre-COVID FTF 14.4 min (Figure 3).
- Phone calls accounted for mean 40% (8.4 min) of VC.
- Mean number of 2 phone calls per patient.

#### Figure 3. FTF vs Virtual Consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (mins)</th>
<th>FTF Clinic</th>
<th>Virtual Clinic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Photographs:

- Images requested from 17% (n=8) of patients
- 50% (n=4) were deemed clinically useful.
- Barriers cited to sending photos (Figure 4)

#### Barriers to Completion of Consultation (Figure 5):

- Nineteen (40%) consultations could not be completed on the same day that they commenced.
- This was due to no response from patient in 37% (n=7), awaiting photograph in 32% (n=6), awaiting senior decision 26% (n=5) and pending labs in 5% (n=1).

If consultations had been in FTF format, 36% (n=17) of patients could potentially have been discharged.

### Conclusion

- Virtual Clinics constitute an increased burden on dermatology resources compared to pre-covid19 FTF clinics.
- Virtual Clinics delay discharge of patients which will further stretch dermatology waiting lists.

**References**