

Introduction

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic necessitated an adaptation for virtual (non face-to-face) remote teleconsultation to maintain timely access to continuous dermatology care.

The dermatology service at University Hospital Galway (UHG) offers teledermatology which comprises an initial audio virtual visits with subsequent visual communication by means of photographic images assessment via secured email if deemed necessary during this pandemic for suitable patients.

Virtual patient consent was obtained and documented for both teleconference and photo sharing.

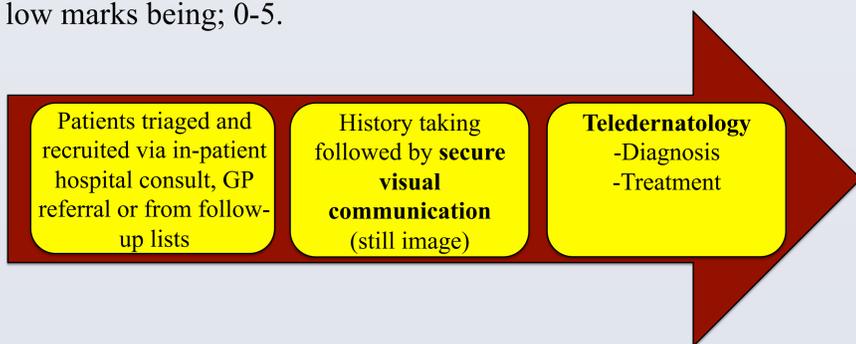
Aims

1. To evaluate patients' satisfaction towards teledermatology during COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To evaluate dermatology diagnosis impact on patient's satisfaction.
3. To determine whether lockdown had an impact on skin disease severity.

Methods

This is a single-centre prospective study between February and March 2021 looking at patients' satisfaction level with the teledermatology service at UHG.

Following consultations, patients were immediately invited to complete a short ten-point scale questionnaire (0=worse, 10=best) assessing level of satisfaction. Further responses were required to clarify reason(s) behind their choices. Satisfaction scale were further divided into high marks; 6-10 and low marks being; 0-5.



Results

42 patients were invited to participate; all (100%) completed the questionnaire.

Demographics:

- 17 male (40.6%) and 25 female (59.5)
- 2 patients (4.8%) were in paediatric age range (<16 years of age)

Figure 1. Total participants: 42 patients

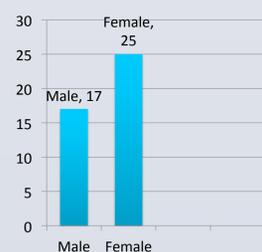


Table 1. Skin diagnoses involved in the survey

Psoriasis	11	Hidradenitis suppuritiva	1
Acne vulgaris	8	Leucocytoclastic vasculitis	1
Dermatitis	7	Linear melanonychia	1
Lichen sclerosis	4	Folliculitis decalvans	1
Benign nevi	4	Actinic keratosis	1
Urticaria	2	Others	1

Results 2

37 patients (88.1%) conveyed their satisfaction with 20 (47.6%) highly satisfied (scale 9-10 out of 10).

26 patients (61.9%) favoured teledermatology as they feel safer during pandemic, 16 patients (43.2%) indicated savings in travel time, 14 patients (37.8%) found savings in travelling cost, and 14 patients (33.3%) felt convenient having reviewed from home.

5 patients (11.9%) were dissatisfied; main reasons being were

- 1) preference of the traditional face-to-face interaction
- 2) concern that their photograph images shared weren't clear.

Figure 2. Satisfaction rate

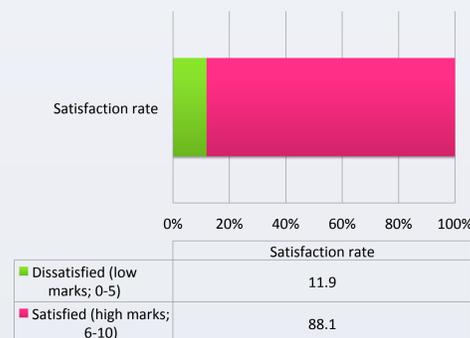
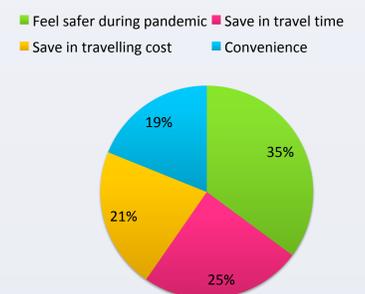


Figure 3. Reasons for favouring teledermatology %



23 patients (54.7%) felt that their skin remained the same during the COVID-19 lockdown. 14 patients (33.3%) found improvement in their skin severity during the same time, while 5 patients (11.9%) noticed a decline in their skin health.

Table 2. Dermatology diagnosis among the patients dissatisfied with teledermatology

Acne vulgaris	1
Folliculitis decalvans	1
Urticaria	1
Actinic keratosis	1
Linear melanonychia	1

Table 3. Skin diseases which show decline in skin health during COVID-19 lockdown.

Psoriasis	2
Acne Vulgaris	1
Leucocytoclastic vasculitis	1
Benign nevus	1

Conclusions

1. Our results demonstrated a high satisfaction level among patients for teledermatology; however, it is limited by
 - a) bias of not including patients that didn't answer their appointment call
 - b) heterogeneity of skin conditions
 - c) patients untrained to take high-quality photos
 - d) limited number of patients

2. Although the diagnostic accuracy of face to face consultation remains higher than teledermatology, patient satisfaction with teledermatology is high.

References

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2. Finnane A, Dallest K, Janda M, Soyer HP. Teledermatology for the Diagnosis and Management of Skin Cancer: A Systematic Review. JAMA Dermatol 2017; 153: 319-327
3. Muraco L. Improved Medical Photography: Key Tips for Creating Images of Lasting Value. JAMA Dermatol 2020; 156: 121-123