



Delivering physiotherapy outpatient assessment and treatment in a severe asthma service in the era of COVID-19

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Background

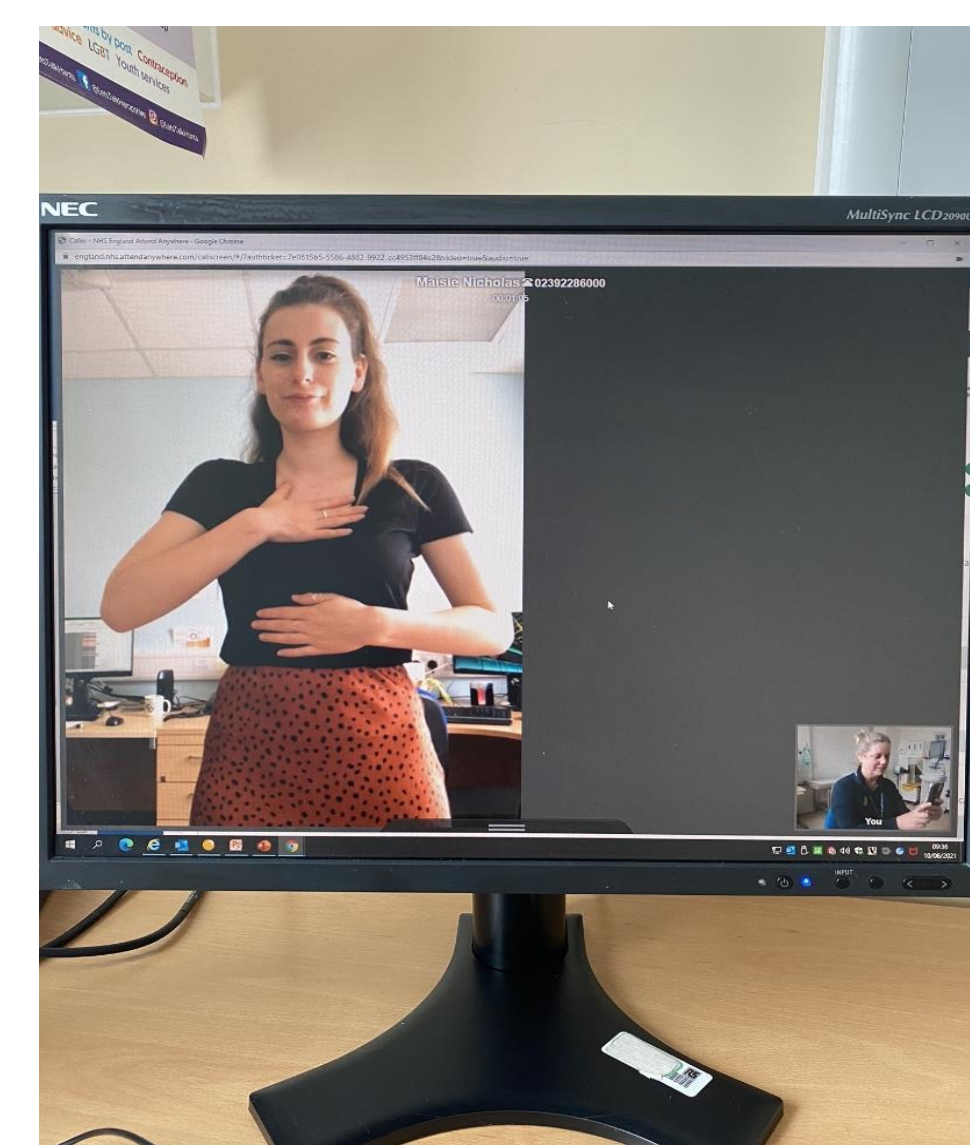
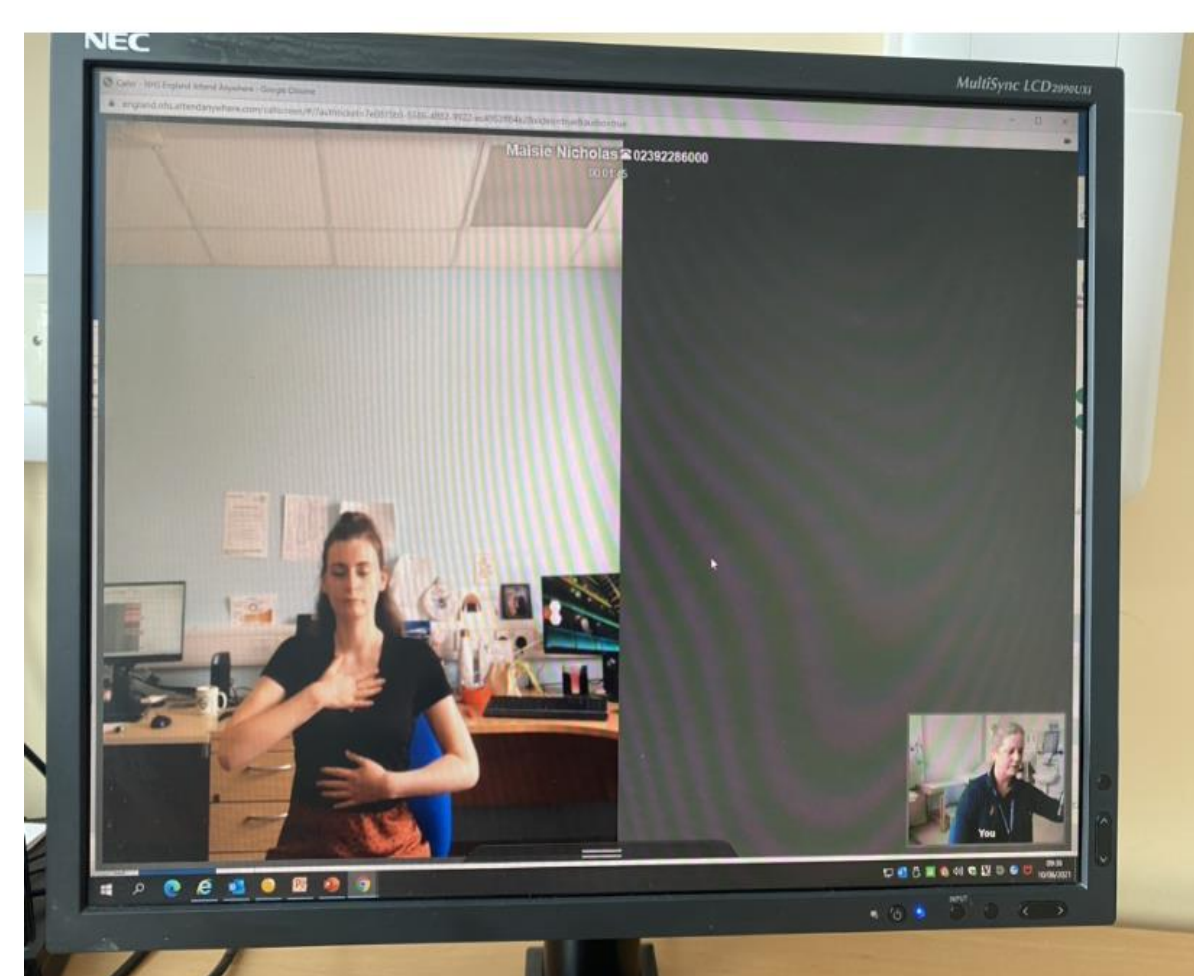
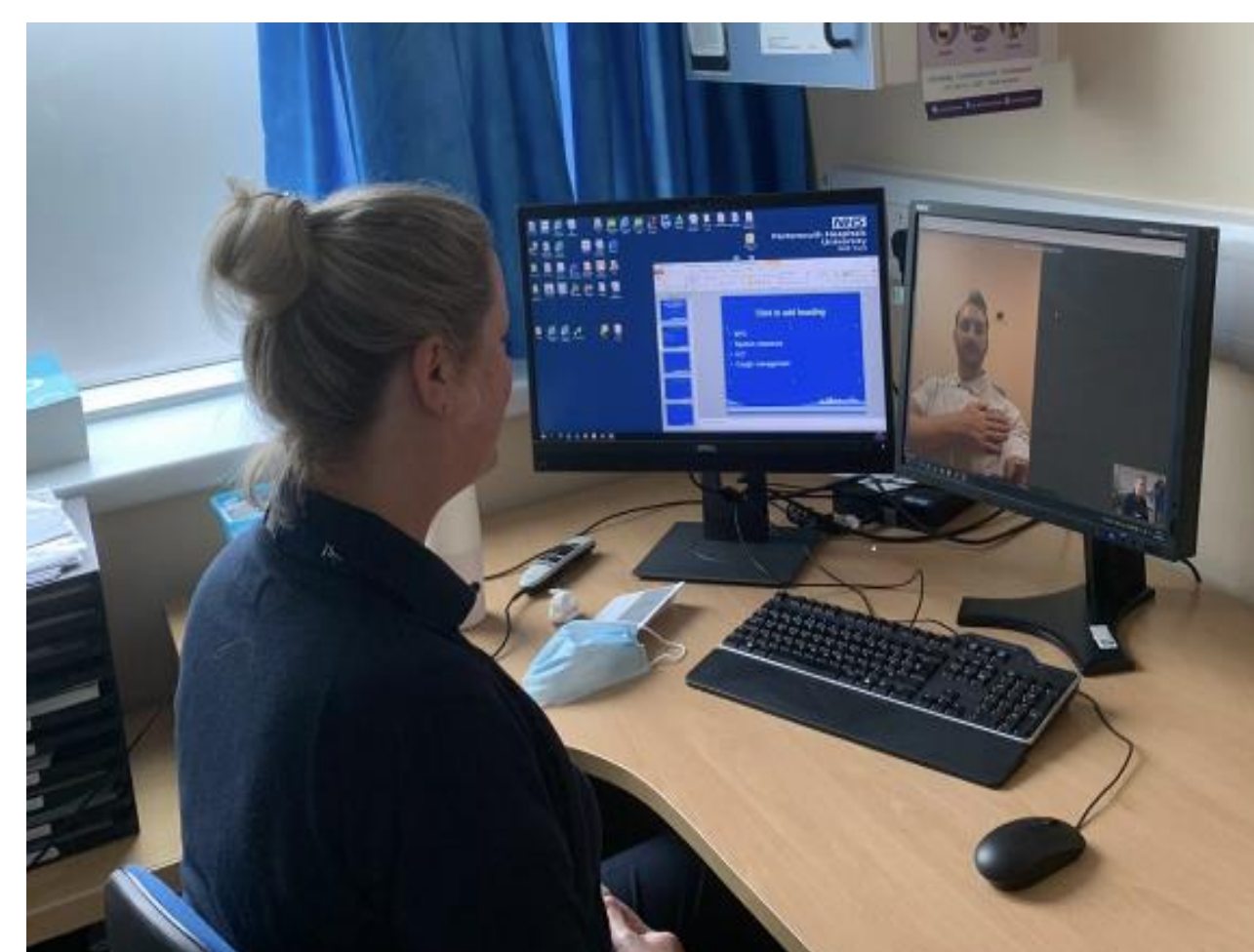
The global COVID-19 pandemic forced clinicians to consider alternative methods of service provision to patients with respiratory conditions who were clinically vulnerable and/or advised to shield.

Breathing pattern disorders (BPD) are a common comorbidity affecting between 29% to 64% of patients with asthma¹. The respiratory physiotherapy team within the Portsmouth Severe Asthma Service (PSAS) recognised the need to continue to assess and deliver treatment for patients with BPD particularly at a time of heightened anxiety.

The web-based video conferencing platform “Attend Anywhere” was adopted as it met our needs as a service provider to provide video consultations to patients through virtual clinics.



Breathing retraining requires precise and highly specific assessment and treatment to ensure optimal outcomes and the decision to use a video conferencing platform was made to utilise the visual medium.



Objective

To ensure that a user-friendly, comprehensive and high-quality respiratory physiotherapy service was being delivered, which met patient's expectations and treatment requirements, all patients using the video conferencing platform were asked to provide feedback.

Method

At the end of every video consultation, written feedback was requested via the video conferencing platform. Sixty-nine responses were received from July 2020-May 2021. Patients were asked to rate their physiotherapy consultation from very good to very poor; how they would prefer to receive treatment; if they would use this method of consultation again and the ease of use of the video consultation.

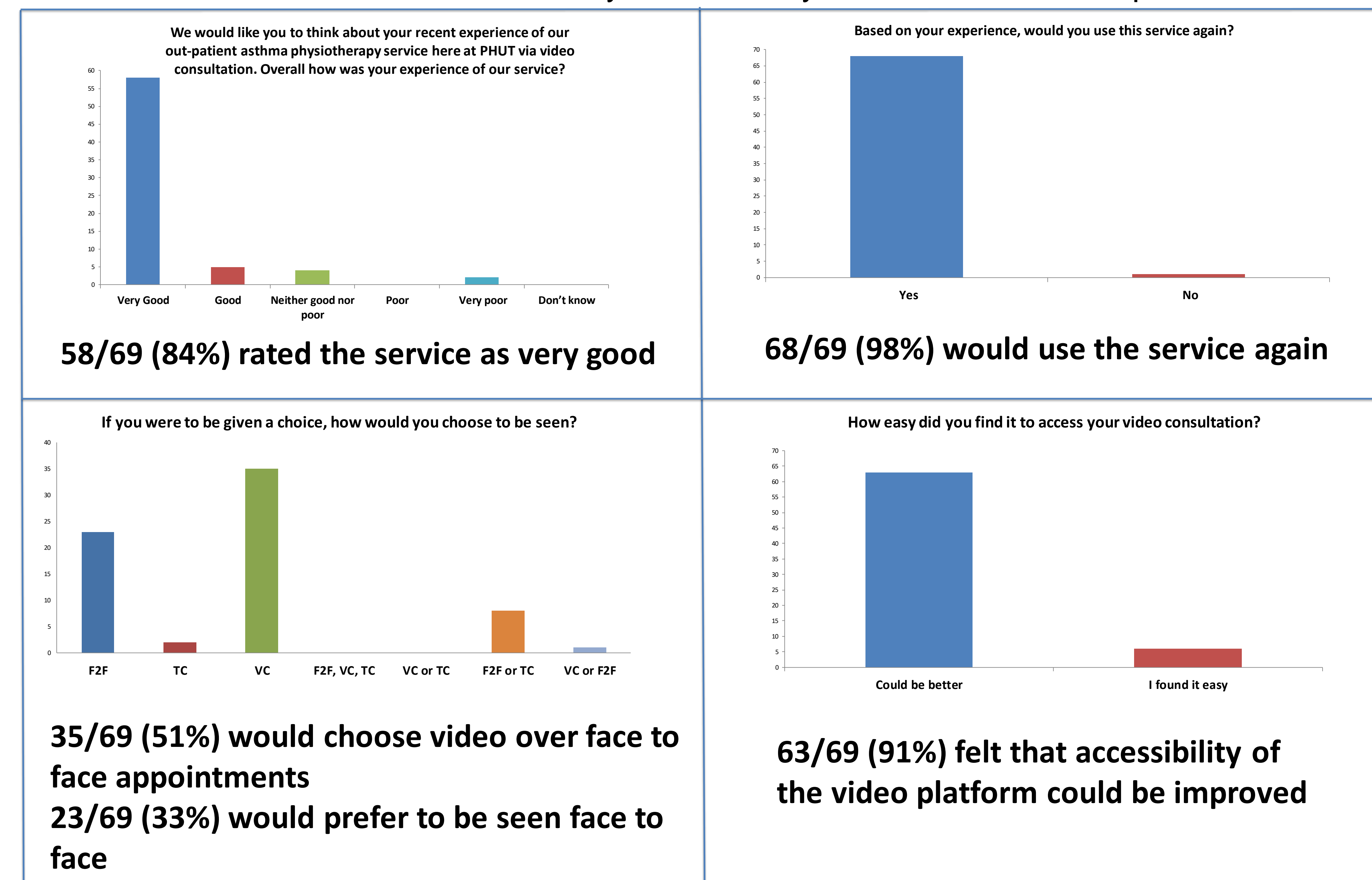
References:

1. Courtney R. Breathing training for dysfunctional breathing in asthma: taking a multidimensional approach. *ERJ Open Res* 2017; 3: 00065-2017

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Results

Patient feedback collated from July 2020 to May 2021. Number of Responses: 69



Qualitative Feedback

- Excellent quality and a very thorough appointment.
- It was helpful to actually see a clinician face to face via video instead of a phone call.
- I feel like I'm learning to control my breathing when I'm having an exacerbation.
- It was very clear, quick to connect and I didn't have to travel from Winchester to Portsmouth.
- Excellent explanation of a more efficient way of breathing using the diaphragm. This has certainly improved my breathing and I am not so short of breath as 3 months ago.

Discussion

Video consultations have proven to be a feasible and successful way of assessing BPD in asthma patients. Despite feedback regarding the ease of accessing the online platform being suboptimal, overarching positive responses to video consultations was received. With 51% favouring being seen via video consultation rather than face to face, this has wider implications for patients and the NHS including reduced travel time to appointments and reduced waiting room pressures.