Obstetric patient satisfaction survey –Telephonic Anaesthetic consultation

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INTRODUCTION

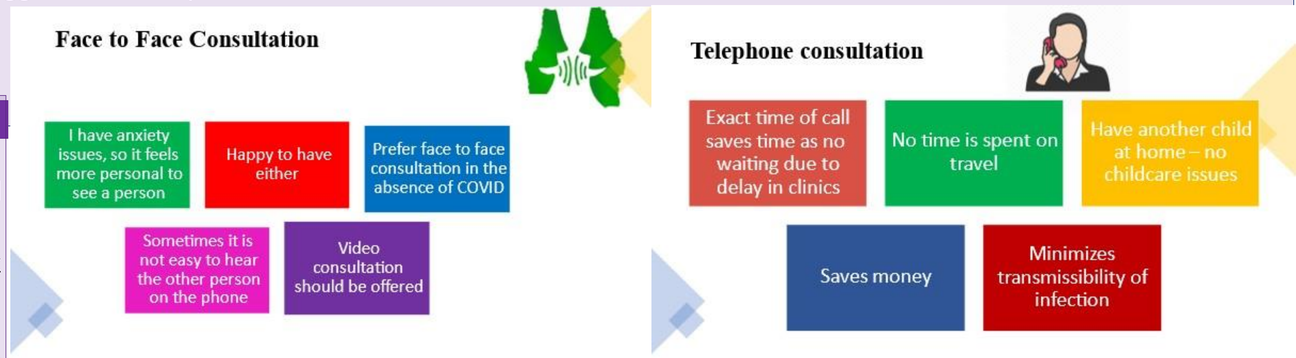
During the Covid -19 pandemic, to protect the staff and the patients from the Corona virus infection and due to increased staff shortage from redeployment and self-isolation, face-to-face appointments in high-risk obstetric anaesthesia clinics were replaced by virtual telephone consultations in our hospital .[1,2] This patient satisfaction survey was undertaken to evaluate the quality of this new approach to anaesthetic services and compare it to the conventional face to face assessment and review the areas in need of improvement.

METHODS

We conducted a retrospective survey over a period of 4 months from September to December 2021, evaluating satisfaction amongst obstetric patient population having telephonic anaesthetic preassessments. Patients received either e-mails with the questionnaire or were telephoned and their responses to the questions were noted. They were asked to rate statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 was strongly disagree and 5 was strongly agree. Patients were also asked if they had any prior experience with telephonic consultations and were encouraged to express their feelings in the free comments section.
Patients were asked to assess the quality of their telephonic anaesthetic consultation on various parameters like duration of the consultation, comparison with face-to-face consultation, relevant questions asked by the assessor, opportunity to ask questions, recommendation for similar consultation in future and suggestions to improve this novel service.

RESULTS

A total of 53 responses were obtained (21 via emails and 32 via telephone calls)
21%(11/53) of the patients had, had a prior telephonic anaesthetic consultation. Of these 57% preferred telephonic assessment over face-to-face consultation.
More than 90% respondents were satisfied with the duration of the consultation, the opportunity to ask questions and the relevance of the questions
73% of the patients felt that they were given a clear anaesthesia plan but 21% had a neutral opinion.
79% agreed or strongly agreed that after the consultation they could decide their preferred mode of labour analgesia
59% expressed their desire to have telephonic consultations in future while 41% said that they would prefer face-to-face consultations
64% of the participants were satisfied with the patient information leaflets sent beforehand



DISCUSSION

77% of patients recommended telephonic mode of assessment – so it is a very likely to be preferred with most trusts offering hybrid approach to anaesthetic patient consultations in the current climate
23% were in favour of telephone consultation even if they had the option of face-to-face clinic
Recommendations for improvement in Service

- Pre-appointment, a letter should be sent to the patient explaining the reasons for the consultation and what to expect from it
- Offer the option of Video call / Microsoft Teams meeting
- Email the summary of the anaesthetic assessment to the patient at the end of consultation

REFERENCES

1. Jardine J, Relph S, Magee LA, et.al. Maternity services in the UK during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic: a national survey of modifications to standard care. BJOG 2021; 128:880–889.
2. M. Round, R. Dunham, L. Harkett, et al. Telephone anaesthetic preoperative consultation: patient satisfaction service evaluation. IntJObstetAnesth.2021;46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijoa.2021.103042.