

Message delivered?

Implementing a text-message based system to improve obstetric anaesthetic follow-up in a teaching hospital

All patients who received an anaesthetic intervention for labour and/or delivery should be reviewed postnatally. Traditional face-to-face follow-up faces a number of challenges summarised in Figure 1. In an effort to mitigate these issues, we introduced a text message-based follow-up model for selected cases via the platform AccuRx. We audited & re-audited this in May & October 2024. This has shown improvement in reach and efficiency of follow-up, while maintaining patient safety in our unit, and has potential to be applied to other units.

What is the typical workload in our unit?

How many patients are suitable* for text follow-up?

*Inpatient follow-up is still carried out for patients that are not fluent in English, that have had a recognised anaesthetic complication, received GA or do not have access to a mobile phone

ON AVERAGE
58-77
ANAESTHETIC INTERVENTIONS PER WEEK

≥ 90%
IN BOTH CYCLES

PREVIOUSLY	NEW SYSTEM
LIST PRINTED & CROSS-REFERENCED MANUALLY	TEXT MESSAGE SCHEDULED ON ACCURX
PATIENTS REVIEWED ON THE WARD AS TIME ALLOWS	TEXT RESPONSE ARRIVES IN SHARED INBOX WHICH IS REVIEWED DAILY BY TEAM
ISSUES HANDED OVER IN PERSON & THEN FOLLOWED UP AD-HOC	ANY ISSUES ARE FLAGGED ELECTRONICALLY & FOLLOWED UP IN PERSON/BY PHONE
FOLLOW UP DOCUMENTED IN WRITING & ON SYSTEM	FOLLOW-UP TRAIL REMAINS ON ACCURX UNTIL CASE CLOSED

Our text follow-up questions	☒ Headache	☒ Loss of sensation
	☐ Difficulty breathing	☐ Pain during C/S
	☐ Difficulty passing urine	Satisfaction with analgesia ★★★★★☆
	☐ Difficulty mobilising	Satisfaction with experience ★★★★★☆
	☐ Loss of sensation	☒ Would you like to speak to anaesthetist?

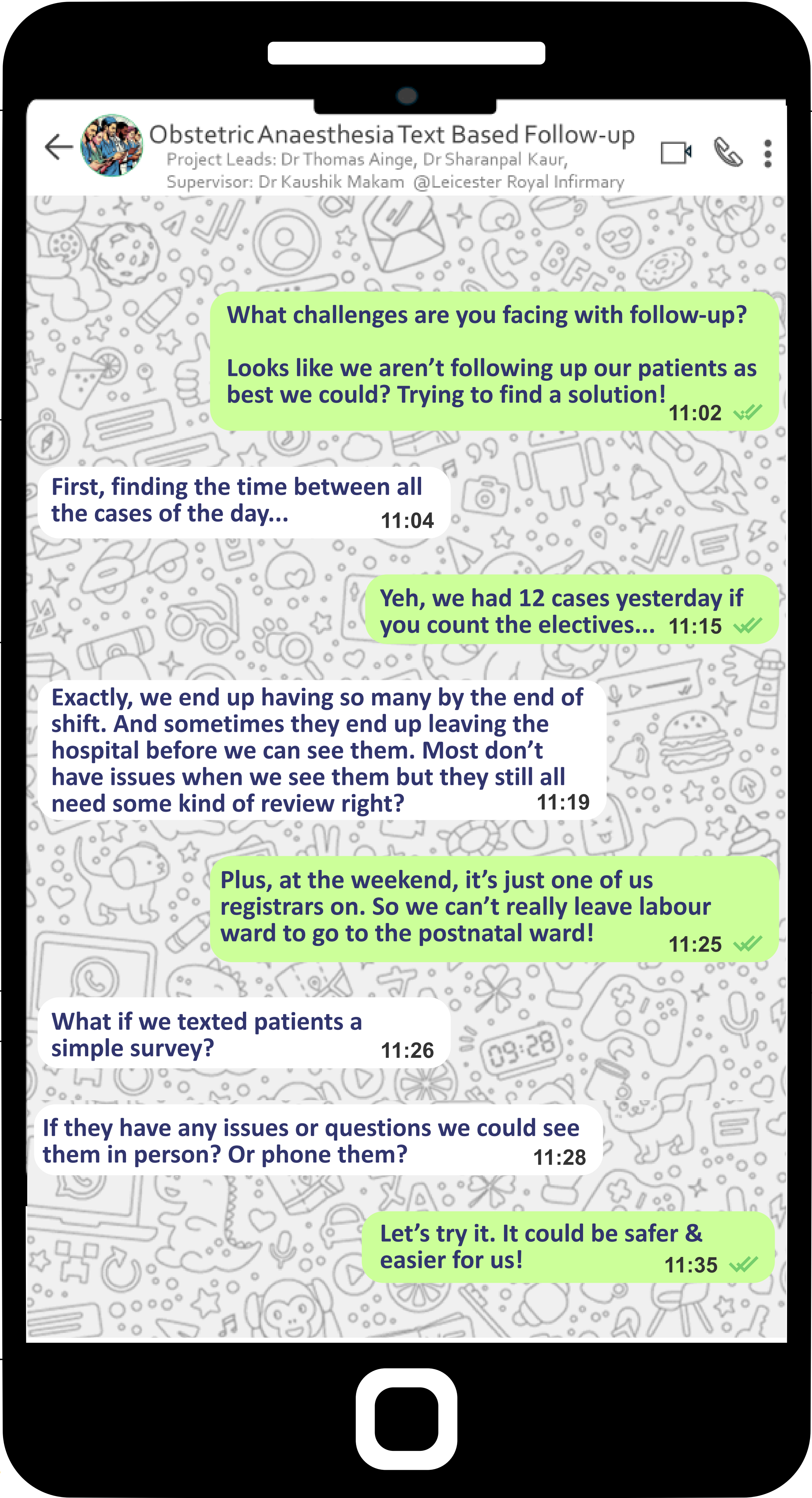
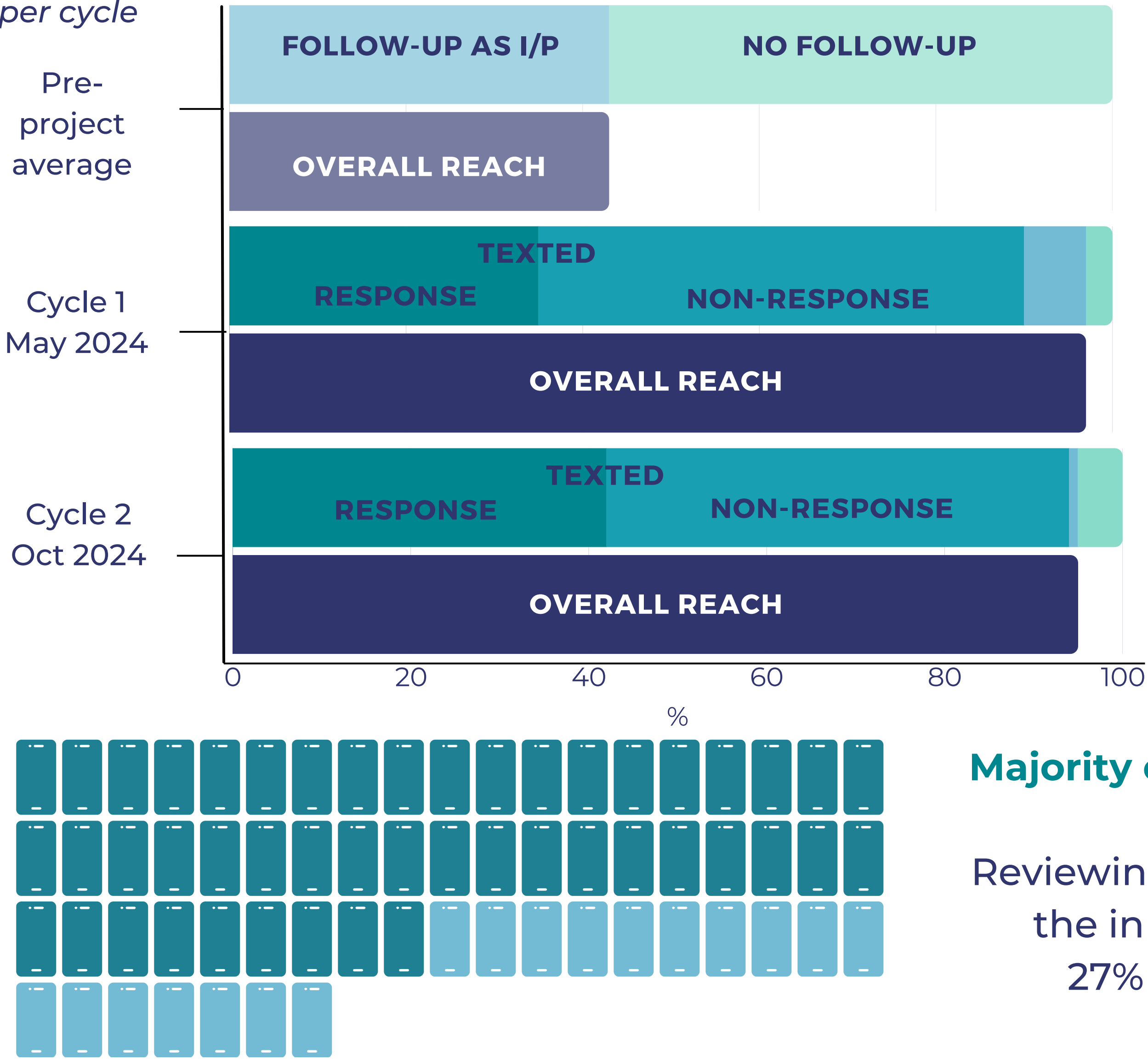


Figure 1. An imagined phone conversation demonstrating the main issues of traditional face-to-face follow-up for parturients

Figure 2. Graph showing (a) breakdown of type of follow-up per data cycle (b) overall reach - % patients followed up by text or in person per cycle



How many patients are we now following up?

Greater reach compared to prior method

More patients are being contacted (texted or seen in person if required)

Increasing response to texts

Between cycles 1 & 2 we introduced patient posters in the maternity ward

Majority of patients who respond do not require further follow-up

Reviewing the text message responses in the inbox over a 2-week period (n=64), 27% needed to be phoned or seen in person

Keeping the conversation going - what's next?

CURRENT CHALLENGES

More patients contacted but planned inpatient reviews may be missed

Not all patients respond to texts

MDT not always aware & system may change

Face-to-face visit time reduced but inbox needs regular review

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Colour coding inpatient reviews
Creating a GA survey

Survey patients to explore non-response patterns

Departmental induction & involvement of midwifery

Introduction of a SOP Meetings & changing paperwork