Introducing the 'Benign Eyelid Lesion Pathway': 1 year Experience of Synchronous Tele-oculoplastics in a teritary Hospital

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Introduction

Patients with benign eyelid lesions make up a large proportion of referrals to the oculoplastic service and lend themselves well to tele-medicine with assessments heavily reliant on history, observation-based examination and photographs to enable management decision-making.

The role of asynchronous telemedicine in Ophthalmology is well established. Our tertiary unit set up tele-oculoplastics clinics for all new patients referred for benign eyelid lesions comprising teleconsultation with antecedent patient photograph: Benign Eyelid Lesion Pathway (BELP) [Figure 1]. One year on, we describe a retrospective analysis of 974 patients looking at distinct parameters of effectiveness.

Aim

To demonstrate the effectiveness and safety of synchronous teleophthalmology service in the management of patients with benign eyelid lesions.

Methods

We retrospectively collected data from electronic patient records (EPR) for BELP patients from July 2020 to August 2021 (n=974). We analyzed

1) **Time efficiency:** referral time to treatment plan, consultation duration in minutes, average waiting times, number of patients seen per clinician and DNA rate
2) **Accessibility:** miles travelled to clinic
3) **Theatre utilization:** cancellation rate
4) **Safety:** via a surveillance clinic

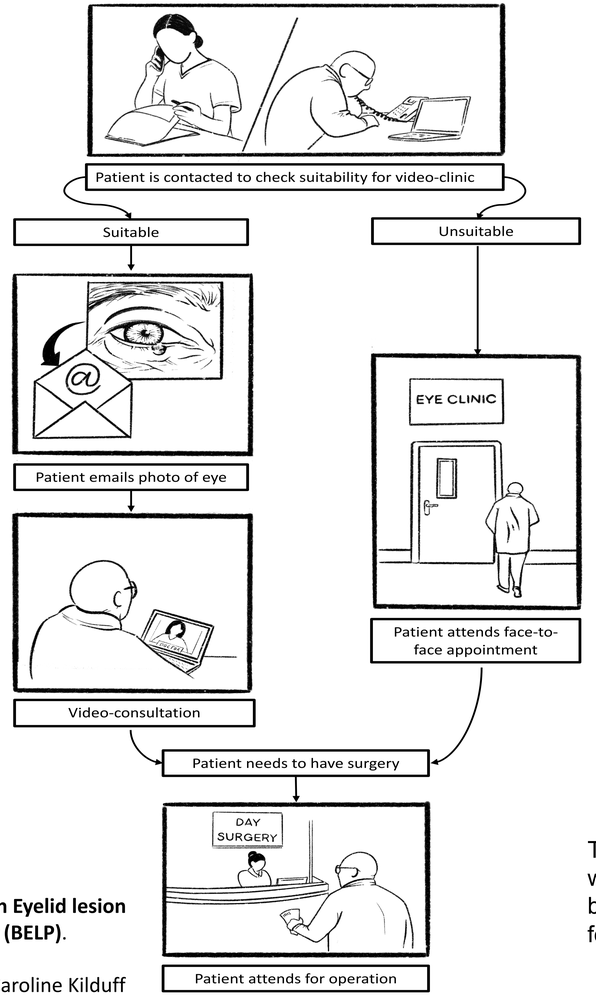


Figure 1: Benign Eyelid lesion pathway (BELP).

Illustration by Caroline Kilduff

Results

Theatre Utilization & Time Efficiency

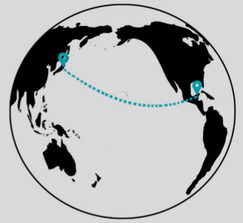
- 57.3% (n=558) were listed for a surgical procedure from tele-consultation, 94.9% (n=513) of these proceeded to surgery.
- 22.8% (n=222) discharged, 10.7% (n=104) had further video follow-up, 6.7% (n=65) required face-face follow-up.
- **No missed diagnosis of a malignancy of a presumed benign lesion.**

	Routine clinic	BELP pathway
Time to referral	15 weeks	11 weeks
DNA rate	18.43 %	2.57 %
Avg consultation time	15 minutes	8 minutes

Accessibility

7443.91 miles of travel collectively saved by 974 patients over 1 year.

This is the exact flight distance between Cancun International Airport to Tokyo-Narita International Airport across the Pacific Ocean.



Conclusion

Tele-oculoplastics provides a streamlined, safe, effective, and logistically convenient way to review benign eyelid lesions. With the increased waiting times for referral to biopsy of eyelid lesions, this clinic shows it is imperative to provide digital accessibility for patient assessment and booking to operating theatre.