Improving Digital Skills to Address Digital Exclusion in Oculoplastic Outpatient Clinics

JUWAIRIYA REHMAN, RISHI RAMESSUR, SWAN KANG

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Introduction

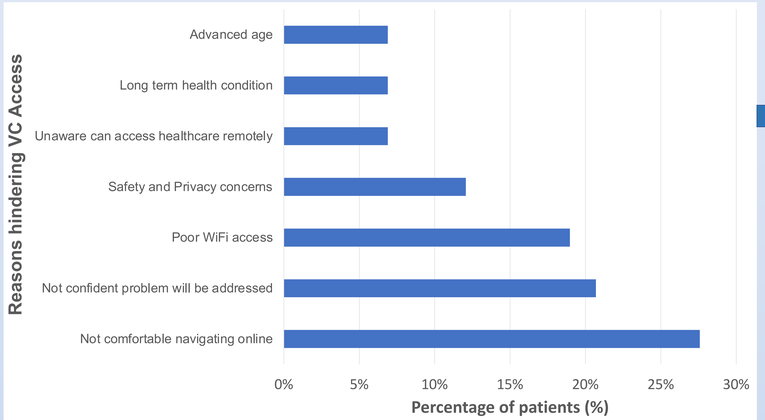
- Healthcare services have become increasingly digitalised since COVID-19.
- Lack of digital skills, internet access, and digital devices are identified as major factors contributing to digital exclusion.

Methods

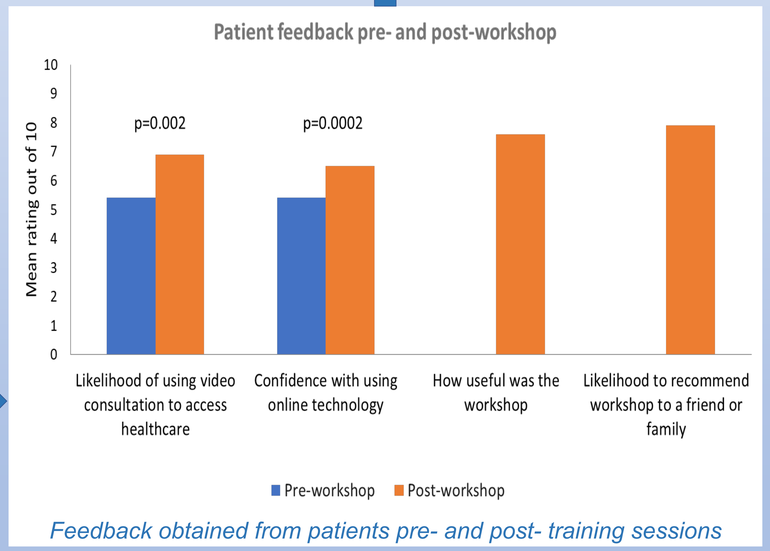
- We invited patients who previously declined a video consultation and those expressing interest in improving digital skills for a bespoke training session to use our Video consultations (VC) platform, take 'selfie' photos, and send them via email.
- We provided internet data packs to those who lacked internet access.
- Pre- and post-training surveys explored patients' confidence with online services, inclination to use VC and perceived utility of the training using a 10-point Likert scale (0 'extremely unlikely' to 10 'extremely likely').
- Two-tailed paired *t-test* was used to assess significance of rating differences pre- and post-training.
- Qualitative feedback was analysed thematically.

Results

- Feedback was obtained from 38/51 (75%) patients (average age 66 years, 47% male, 53% female).
- Patients reported greater inclination to use (mean rating 6.9/10 vs 5.5/10, p=0.002) – and felt more confident with (mean rating 6.7/10 vs 5.3/10, p=0.0002) – VCs after attending the training compared to before.
- Patients found the training useful (mean rating 7.6/10) and were likely to recommend it to family and friends (mean rating 7.9/10).



Patient reported reasons preventing their VC access



Feedback obtained from patients pre- and post- training sessions

Conclusions

- Patients considered digital skills training useful to improve confidence and motivation with using digital health services.
- Scaling these either locally or by collaborative work with community networks helps mitigate health inequality caused by digital exclusion as healthcare provision become more reliant on telemedicine.

Study Contributions

This study demonstrates that digital skills training can be helpful in equipping patients with the digital skills and confidence to access VC.

Study Impact

A scaled approach to address digital exclusion via digital skills training can reduce health inequality as services increase their reliance on telemedicine.

Synopsis

- A digital skills training session was set up at Moorfields Eye Hospital to equip digitally excluded patients with the skills needed to access VC.
- Patients found the session improved their digital skills and confidence.