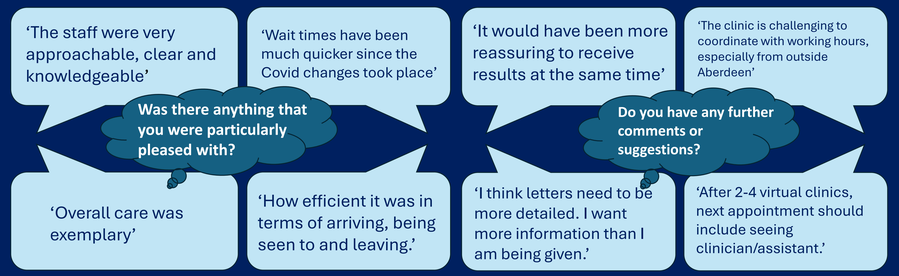
Patient Satisfaction with an Asynchronous Virtual Keratoconus Clinic: A Service Evaluation

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Background

- Keratoconus is a progressive, bilateral corneal ectasia that leads to thinning and cone-shaped bulging of the cornea and is a major indication for corneal transplantation in the Western world. [1]
- Patient satisfaction is a vital healthcare quality measure influenced by factors like communication, wait times, and continuity of care; person-centered approaches and feedback help identify issues and improve service delivery. [2]

This study aims to evaluate patient satisfaction with the Virtual Keratoconus at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary through targeted questionnaires, identifying strengths and areas for improvement based on patient feedback.

Method:

Study Design: Retrospective cross-sectional questionnaire-based study.

Questionnaire: 16 questions designed using previously validated questionnaires and NHS England's guide [3, 4, 5]. Distributed online on SNAP software and Microsoft word.

Participants: 182 patients who attended the Virtual Keratoconus Clinic from December 2019 – July 2023.

Data Collection:

- Patients were contacted via email and telephone.
- A structured questionnaire assessed various aspects of care.
- Follow-ups were conducted over two weeks to maximize response rates.
- Non-responders contacted 3 times.

Analysis:

- Likert scale responses were used to quantify satisfaction.
- Open-ended feedback was categorised thematically.
- SPSS software was used for analysis of data.

Final Response Rate: 30.1%

Key Findings

61.8% Male
38.1% Female
respondents

84.6% of patients reported being **satisfied or very satisfied** with their **overall care.**

☑ **71%** felt that the staff were **knowledgeable**, ensuring patient confidence.

☑ **84%** felt the clinic visit was the **right length of time** and **82%** felt there **wasn't too many tests** being done

☑ **76%** were happy to **receive their results by post** after the clinic

63% of patients felt **reassured by the visit, and ~20% did not feel reassured**

47% had expected to **discuss their test results** during the clinic,

67% were happy with the **letter they received relaying the results** of the assessment

91% of patients were happy to return to the Virtual Keratoconus Clinic in the future

Discussion

Strengths:

- Comprehensive and domain-specific questionnaire design.
- Surveys created using SNAP software to enhance accessibility and usability.
- Multiple contact methods (telephone and email) and follow-up attempts to improve response rate.

Limitations:

- Low response rate despite multiple follow-ups.
- Recall bias due to time gap (responses from patients dating back to 2019).
- Nonresponse bias, particularly among older and female patients.
- Social desirability bias in telephone responses.

Comparison to literature:

- Another study on virtual keratoconus clinics found most patients were satisfied when results were shared via video or phone consultation. [6]
- In contrast, this study showed patients were also satisfied receiving results by post, though some preferred in-person explanation.

Recommendations

- Inform patients during booking that results will be sent by post to manage expectations.
- Improve access to senior staff for result explanations (e.g., consultant clinic every 2–4 visits).
- Enhance clarity and detail of result letters and provide a contact number for queries.
- Explore service expansion outside Aberdeen to improve access.
- Collect feedback immediately after appointments to reduce recall bias.
- Encourage staff to continue demonstrating strong interpersonal skills and clear communication.

Conclusion

- There is a high level of patient satisfaction with the Virtual Keratoconus Clinic in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.
- Satisfaction for the Virtual Keratoconus Clinic could be improved through reducing waiting times, increasing access to senior staff, providing more detailed results, and ensuring patient follow-up.

Future work should focus on continuing to improve patient satisfaction and implementing similar services in other locations.

References available upon request