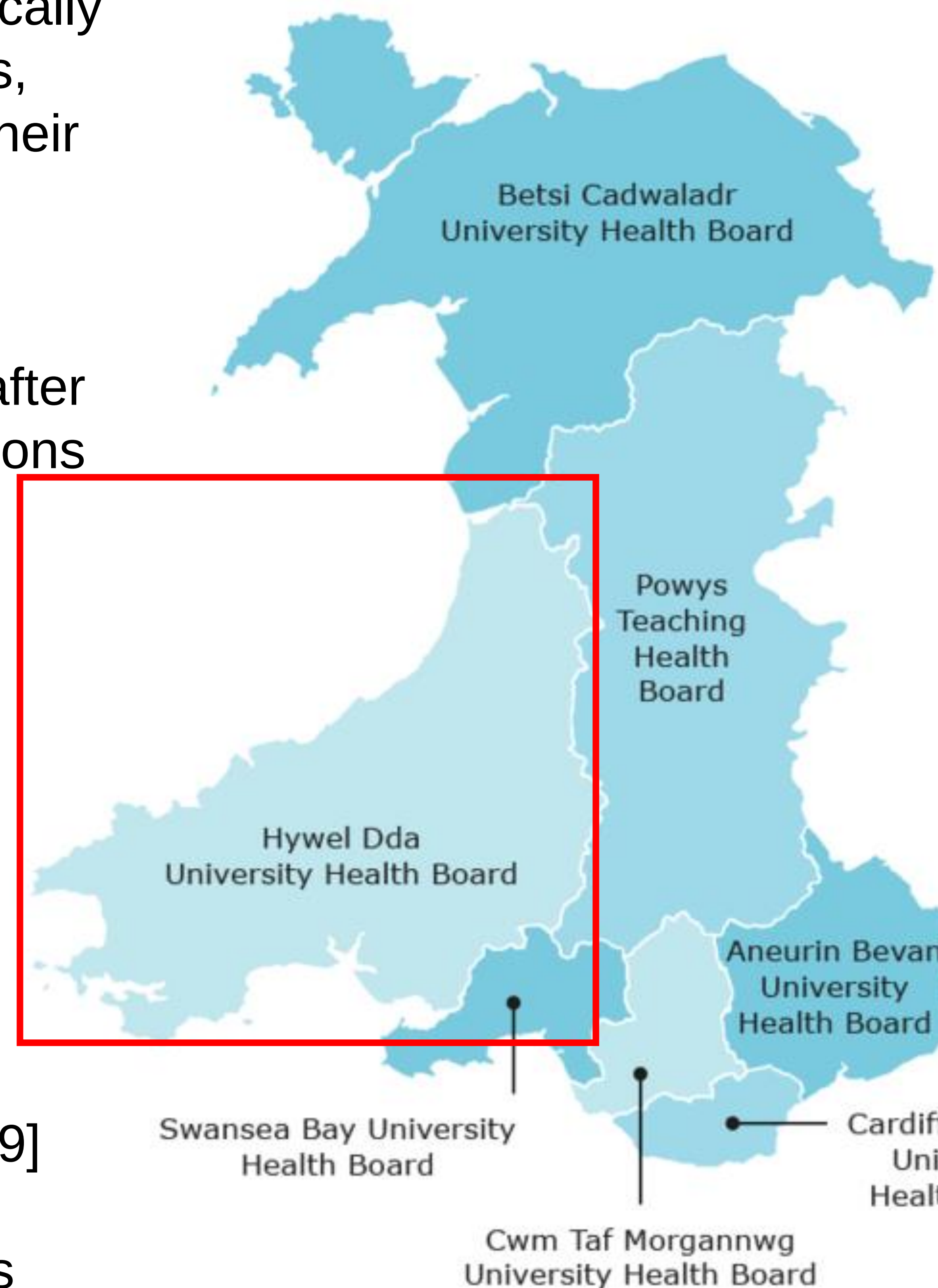


How COVID-19 has improved access to Sexual Reproductive Health Services

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Introduction:

When the Covid pandemic arrived, the Sexual Health service in Hywel Dda had to adapt and change dramatically and rapidly. Prior to Covid the service ran walk in clinics, whereby patients would arrive and wait to be seen for their sexual health needs. During Covid, the service used technology to change the way patients accessed the service. The use of video and telephone consultations increased, and were used as the first point of contact, after the patient had phoned the central phone line. Medications were posted out using registered postal services, and this included abortion medications. Only patients that required to be examined were seen face to face

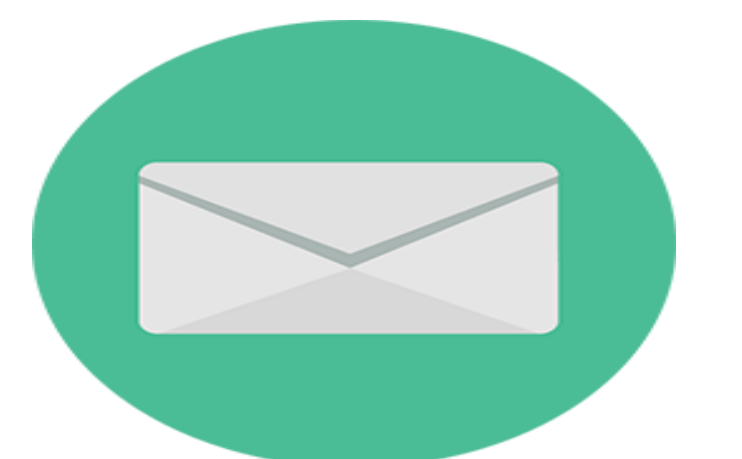


Results:

In 2019 96% of patients were seen face to face in walk in clinics, and the service had 23 000 attendances

In 2021, 46% of patients were seen face to face and 54% of patients either had a telephone or video consultation. The service had 25 000 attendances in 2021

Approx 3 000 packages of medications were also posted out during 2021, whilst none was sent in 2019. These included approx 900-1000 abortion medication packs



Methods:

Data was collected from the year preceding Covid [2019] and compared with data from 2021. This looked at how patients accessed services and the numbers of patients that accessed the service in those periods of time.

Discussion:

Hywel Dda University Health Board covers 3 counties of rural South West Wales: Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion. These 3 counties cover a quarter of the land area of Wales and has a population of 384 000. To access clinics patients would have to travel large distances to access sexual health services. When the Covid pandemic arrived and the use of technology increased, meant that patients could access services remotely and this has reduced inequities in access to residents of Hywel Dda



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