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# Patient Positivity through Photos- What NHS Patients Really Think of Digital Healthcare

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## Abstract

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Technological advancements within healthcare have been on the rise in recent years [1] but have increased tenfold since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This rapid increase was at a time where services, particularly within healthcare, needed to continue to communicate and deliver care to their patients during this increasingly challenging time. One of the most used digital innovations during this time were video consultations (VC) between clinicians and their patients to ensure continuity of care, across digital platforms when in-person, face-to-face (FTF) consultations were not always possible.

Due to this, Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Cymru alongside Welsh Government implemented the Welsh VC Service [2] for all 7 Health Boards within Wales to use the video consulting platform 'Attend Anywhere' for consultations between clinician and patient. The uptake of VC across Wales has been remarkable, with clinician, patient, and NHS Wales experiencing benefits of utilising VC amongst healthcare practice.

*"This is my first experience of a video call, I was pleasantly surprised" (Patient, Female, 64-80, BCUHB, Doctor, Review)*

*"AA is a way of bridging direct face-to-face and a visual interaction can be helpful for clinical assessment" (Nurse, HDUHB)*

TEC Cymru have continually evaluated the VC service across Wales to ensure sustainability and improvement of its use now, and into the future across services. Part of this evaluation [3] captures experiences and opinions from patients who have used the VC service. This has been achieved through survey and interview capture, but also with patient perspectives through photos. While findings have been able to quash assumptions of those that are using and not using VC, learn and understand more about how to use VC and make its use more effective, some details are hard to put into words. Due to this, TEC Cymru asked patients to share an image highlighting how VC has made them feel. This data collection method allowed for patient satisfaction to be captured visually.

The photo perspective from patients encapsulated and supported the themes from the patient evaluation [4] including: home comforts, family involvement and environmental satisfaction and savings.

### VC and Patient Home Comforts

Many of the images shared by patients placed an emphasis on being able to have their VC appointment from the comfort of their own home, in support of the narrative left by patients during the evaluation.

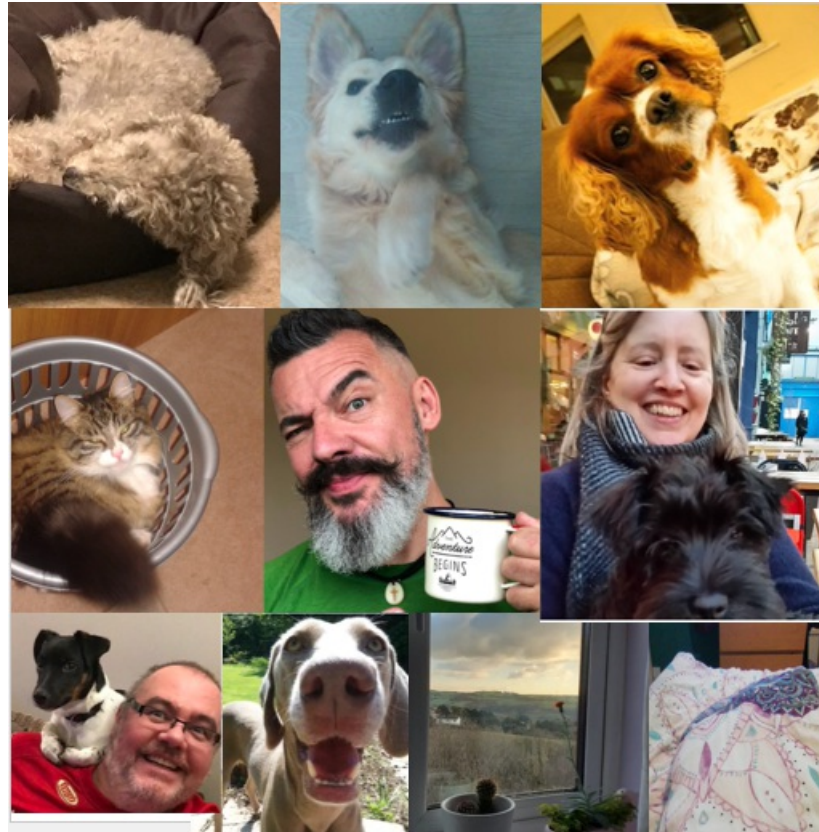


Figure 1. Patient perspective of VC through photos.

*“Very convenient doing a consultation from home” (Patient, HDUHB, 64-80, Female, Physiotherapist, Other Therapies, therapy / Treatment)*

*“Nice to be in the comfort of your own home and easier to be open and honest” (Patient, BCUHB, 45-64, Psychiatry & Mental Health, Review)*

The images displayed patients being at home with their pets, with a cup of tea, or both! This was a really valued addition to their care for many patients as having the opportunity to have home comforts such as this available to them during appointments made them feel far more comfortable during consultations.

### Patient and Family Involvement

During the collection of photos from patients, it became apparent that family involvement was important. Many patients left

images displaying themselves with members of their family happy and smiling while using VC.

This was supported by the family involvement noted from the patient narrative where patients felt supported in their care by having family around to support.

*"[Name removed] has provided excellent care to our daughter and family during these difficult times. She has supported us to seek a consultation and psychiatric assessment. We cannot thank her enough" (Parent of Patient, ABUHB, 13-17, Psychiatry & Mental Health, therapy / Treatment)*

*"It was great to feel that someone was there to chat to, who could see a difference in [patient name removed], while at the same time supporting us as a family. Worked really well, thank you" (Guardian/Carer of Patient, SBUHB, 25-44, Male, Psychiatry & Mental Health, Review)*

### Preferred Patient Environment and Environment Benefits

The images also highlight patients being satisfied being able to have their consultations from their preferred environment, particularly during the pandemic. Lots of patients left images with their thumbs up, a sure sign that they were satisfied with VC.

Not only this, but patients expressed that they felt the environment benefited from the use of VC. Patients were travelling far less to in-person, FTF consultations and therefore had less impact on the environment [5].





Figures 2 and 3. Patient experience of VC through photos.

*“Not having to travel to the hospital and waiting in the waiting room was so much better, and there was no stress trying to get around everything all of the time” (Patient, CVUHB, 45-64)*

*“Absolutely fantastic service – very efficient in that no travel, no parking, no waiting in hospitals” (Patient, BCUHB, 45-64)*

Overall, patients within Wales are extremely satisfied with their use of VC. TEC Cymru’s evaluation and the photo perspective from patients has been able to illustrate just how many benefits there are for the patient, the clinician and NHS Wales on a whole.

## References

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