

AN EXPLORATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION, DELIVERY AND IMPACT OF VIDEO GROUP CONSULTATIONS TO MANAGE LONG-TERM CONDITIONS IN PRIMARY CARE GENERAL PRACTICE: A PHD STUDY

School of Nursing and Midwifery

Eleanor Scott, RN, MSc (PhD Student) e.r.scott@keele.ac.uk
 Dr Andrew Finney (Lead Supervisor)
 Dr Laura Swaithe (Supervisor)
 Dr Gwenllian Wynne-Jones (Supervisor)



PHD STUDENTSHIP

This PhD Studentship began in autumn 2020 and thus still in its infancy. The use of video group consultations is a novel concept which has yet to be demonstrated, due to a limited evidence and practice base. Whilst at the beginning of this PhD, we hope to demonstrate a robust evidence base for video group consultations for the future of primary care general practice.

BACKGROUND

Over the last decade, the NHS and primary care general practice have faced a number of challenging contexts. Policies such as the 'Five Year Forward View' (2014), the 'General Practice Forward View' (2016) and the 'NHS Long Term Plan' (2019) have attempted to address the changing contexts of the NHS, by proposing new and more efficient models of integrative and collaborative care, such as Primary Care Networks (PCN's) and sustainability and transformation plans. However, practice teams are facing increased pressures to manage more patients in primary care, leading to a recruitment and retention crisis. The need to employ newer ways of working has thus become increasingly apparent.

WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR....

FACE TO FACE GROUP CONSULTATIONS

Face to face group consultations were posed as a solution to this crisis, included as one of the *Ten High Impact Actions* (RCGP, 2018). The value of group consultations for both patients and staff was identified by Swaithe et al. (2020) yet proposed many challenges in implementation and sustainability. Swaithe et al. (2020) further identified:

FACILITATORS	BARRIERS	PRACTICALITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holistic Model of Care Improved cohesiveness between teams Upskilling Of Junior Clinicians Enhanced peer to peer support in LTC management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uptake of the approach is dependent on a practice's innate motivations – a spectrum of engagement Increased workload and commitments Lack of role definition Lack of support for implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent on effective facilitation and the 'champion' role Lack of clarity on skill set and role expectations Increased need for training Requires CCG and practice buy-in

VIDEO GROUP CONSULTATIONS (VGCs)

In early 2020, the general practice landscape was forced to restructure due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiation of VGCs is one response to the pandemic. VGCs can be described as an overarching term to describe a delivery of care virtually with a group of patients (around 6-8) who share the same or similar health concern. Roles involved include: a clinician, a facilitator and a coordinator. VGCs have been utilised in the management of long-term conditions but have also been used to support patients regarding long-covid and loneliness. Due to the novelty of the approach, many practices are reluctant to utilise this method, favouring one-to-one video consultations or telephone appointments. There is a clear disparity in engagement of practice, with those fully embedding VGCs to complete regular routine reviews and those who are unfamiliar with this concept. Despite this, further research needs to assess and evaluate the delivery and impact of VGCs in primary care settings.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PHD

- To provide a more robust evidence base for video group consultations in primary care general practice.
- To gain a greater understanding of the use of video group consultation in primary care
- To clarify demographics affecting uptake of this approach
- Identification of the barriers and enablers to implementation within general practice teams

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Both the survey questionnaire and the interview topic guide will be informed by stakeholders by hosting a stakeholder advisory group. This will help to generate ideas pertinent to primary care general practice and the development of the thesis

RESEARCH METHODS – A 3 STEP PROCESS

Step One – Systematic Review

Factors affecting uptake and delivery of video group consultations for the management of long-term conditions in primary care general practice: a systematic review



Step Two – Survey

Aim – To demonstrate the uptake and use of video group consultations in primary care general practice

Method – Survey questionnaire using Microsoft Forms

Sample Size – 100 Participants (predicted)

Design – Qualitative/Quantitative

Analysis – Descriptive Statistics and Content Analysis



Step Three – Semi-Structured Interviews

Aim – To evaluate the impact and implementation of video group consultations by health care professionals in primary care general practice

Method – Semi-structured interviews

Sample Size – 15 participants working in primary care general practice using video group consultations

Design – Qualitative

Analysis – Thematic Analysis

FINDINGS

It is anticipated we can demonstrate the key differences with a VGC approach, focusing on demographics, such as what are VGCs used for? Who do VGCs work for? When is this method used? How are VGCs delivered?

This will help to aid the implementation of VGCs in primary care general practice.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped the impact of our findings will demonstrate a robust evidence-base for the use of video group consultations, aiding clinicians and patients to recognise their value in the management of LTCs.



References:

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