Video consulting with your patients

Professor Trisha Greenhalgh on behalf of the IRIHS research team
University of Oxford
1. When are video consultations appropriate?

2. How can our GP practice get set up for video consultations?

3. How do I do a high-quality video consultation?

4. How can patients make the most of video consultations?

5. What is the evidence for quality & safety of video consultations?
1. When are video consultations appropriate?
COVID-related consultations

- Clinician self-isolating
- Patient has COVID or self-isolating
- Patient has ?COVID and is anxious
- Care homes
- Remote cover for staff sickness

Non-COVID-related consultations

- Routine chronic disease check-ups
- Counselling and psychological support
- Any condition where trade-off between attending in person and staying at home favours the latter
Video should not generally be used for:

- Potentially serious, high-risk conditions needing extensive physical examination
- In COVID, if need to measure oxygen saturation
- If internal examination (e.g. gynae) cannot be deferred
- Co-morbidities affecting ability to use the technology (e.g. confusion)
- Serious anxieties about the technology (unless relatives are on hand to help)
- Some hard-of-hearing patients may find video difficult, but if they can lip-read or use chat, video may be better
2. How can our practice get set up for video consultations?
Decide and plan

1. Practice meeting (by video)
2. Manager, clinicians, admin staff
3. Agree what kind of appointments will be done by video
4. Agree what hardware and software will be used
5. Ensure staff know about the plans and their concerns are heard
6. Develop links with local technical support team
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Good internet connection. Preferably, fast broadband.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Select and install software and peripherals e.g. webcam, microphone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Check hardware and software are up to date and audio/video is working.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>If working remotely, ensure read/write access to practice records.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Prepare information for patients on what technology they need.</td>
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</table>
Set up the workflows

12. Update practice website with information on video appointments

13. Update clinic templates to show availability for video appointments


15. Put process in place for scheduled and unscheduled appointments

16. Put arrangements in place for logistics e.g. collecting specimens, e-transfer of prescriptions

17. Make contingency plans for what to do if video link fails
## Training and piloting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>18</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>20</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Staff training" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Provide clinicians" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Test technical" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff training: on-the-job, peer led, team-based</td>
<td>Provide clinicians with all the kit in their rooms, or use a shared room</td>
<td>Test technical aspects by making a dummy call</td>
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<th>21</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Test process" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Test the process, including making an entry on patient’s record</td>
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</table>
3. How do I do a high-quality video consultation?
Before the consultation

1. Confirm that a video consultation seems clinically appropriate.

2. Use a private, well-lit room and ask your patient to do the same.

3. Check you’ve got patient’s phone number in case video link fails.

4. Have patient’s record open. Ideally, have this on a second screen.

5. Before calling the patient, check that all technology is working.
## Starting the consultation

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<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Initiate the consultation e.g. click on url" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Hello, can you see me? Can you hear me?" /> The start can be a bit awkward. Help patient if necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Take verbal consent for video consultation; record COVID-related" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Introduce anyone off camera. Ask patient to do the same" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Reassure patient that consultation will be similar to a standard one" /></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Having a video consultation

11 Video communication may feel less fluent and there may be glitches e.g. blurry picture

12 You don’t need to look at the camera. Looking at the screen is fine

13 Tell the patient when you are doing something else, e.g. taking notes

14 Make written records as you would in a standard consultation

15 Be aware that video communication can be a bit harder for the patient

16 If the video or audio link fails and you can’t reconnect, phone the patient
Closing the consultation

17

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

Summarise carefully (something could have been missed)

18

Is everything clear?

Check that patient understands key points and knows next steps

19

Confirm and record if patient is happy to use video again

20

To end, tell the patient you’re going to close the call, and say goodbye
3. How can patients make the most of video consultations?
Consider if video is needed at all

1. Search for general advice online, e.g., Google ‘NHS coronavirus advice’

2. For many consultations, a phone call may be sufficient.

3. Video provides more information and can be more reassuring.

4. Their doctor or nurse may be self-isolating and working by video.
## Get set up technically

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
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</table>
| 5    | ![WiFi Icon]  
A good internet connection |
| 6    | ![Quiet Please]  
A quiet place where they won’t be disturbed |
| 7    | ![Computers and Tablets]  
Computer, tablet or smartphone with built-in camera and microphone |
| 8    | ![Test Button]  
Test and adjust audio and video connection (relatives can help) |
| 9    | ![Battery Icon]  
Check all equipment is fully charged or connected to a power supply |
| 10   | ![Info Icon]  
Check practice website for detailed instructions |
Booking and connecting

11 Make appointment by following instructions on website

12 Just before the appointment time, click the connection

13 Say hello or wave when you see the doctor or nurse. Adjust settings

14 Give a phone number so they can call you back if necessary
Having your consultation

15. Look at the screen. There’s no need to look directly at the camera.

16. If all goes well, the call will feel like a face to face appointment.

17. Use the screen camera to show things, e.g. where it hurts.

18. Error → Phone Call
   If you get cut off and can’t reconnect, wait for a phone call.

19. Write down advice or instructions, and make sure you understand next steps, e.g. where to leave a specimen.

20. When you’ve both said goodbye, you can disconnect.
Video consulting with your NHS
5. Brief summary of the research literature
1. Randomised trials in hospital outpatient clinics: video appears safe and acceptable in low-risk patients BUT this is largely irrelevant to the current situation.

2. There is limited research on the use of VC in acute epidemic situations or in general practice.

3. Qualitative research: introducing video consultations is culturally and operationally challenging. It helps to frame this as “improving a service” rather than “implementing a new technology”.

4. If the technical connection is good (or even okay), the consultation will unfold very similar to a face-to-face consultation. But major breakdowns make the consultation feel “unprofessional”.

5. It is sometimes possible – though not ideal – to conduct a limited physical examination via video link.

6. Limited evidence from natural disasters (e.g. Australian bushfires) suggests it is possible to mobilise video services quickly in an emergency, but this needs resource