

# Hello, Can You Hear Me? Orthopaedic Clinic Telephone Consultations in the COVID-19 Era- a Patient and Clinician Perspective

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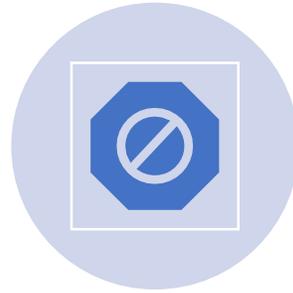
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# Disclosure



**Financial: None**



**Conflict of Interest: None**

# Background

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had seismic effects on the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom.
- National guidelines advised delivering remote consultations in secondary care during the pandemic to reduce transmission of infection.

# Introduction of Telephone Consultations

- Trauma and Orthopaedic (T&O) clinics are one of the busiest clinical environments with each clinician seeing 15-20 patients on average per clinic session.
- With high volume and rapid turnover of patient attendance, running these clinics with appropriate social distancing to reduce spread of infection was deemed challenging.
- To reduce hospital footfall and to ensure patients can safely access healthcare, our T&O department introduced telephone consultations.

# Purpose of Study

- To assess patients' and clinicians' perspective of telephone consultations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To investigate whether this method of consultation could be a viable option in the post-pandemic future.

# Methodology

- Single centre, prospective study in a busy NHS district general hospital
- 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020- 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 ( 12 working days)
- Of 262 patients reviewed, 125 patients had a telephone consultation
- 100 adult patients contacted within 48 hours of their orthopaedic clinic telephone consultation to complete a satisfaction questionnaire
- 25 clinicians' satisfaction and perspectives were assessed

# Methodology

- 5- point Likert scale used
- Fisher's exact test was used to assess differences in the level of patient satisfaction for age, gender and diagnosis of upper/lower limb injuries.



# Patient questionnaire

Satisfaction with the various aspects of the telephone consultation was assessed:

1. Explanation of your condition/ injury
2. Outcome received
3. Answers received to all your questions
4. Overall satisfaction
5. Willingness to use this method of consultation in the long term



# Clinician questionnaire

1. How long do telephone consultations take in comparison to face to face consultations?
2. Is there more preparation involved for telephone consultations in comparison to face to face consultations?
3. Do telephone consultations generate more work after the consultations in comparison to face to face consultations?
4. Are telephone consultations as comprehensive as face to face consultations?
5. Do you feel it is more challenging to explain the diagnosis and management plans in a telephone consultation?
6. How satisfied are you with opportunities for patient questions in the telephone consultation?
7. How satisfied are you with the outcome of the telephone consultations?
8. Are you willing to continue telephone consultations in the long term if deemed suitable for the patient?

# Results: Patient perspective (%)

Likert Scale	Explanation of condition	Outcome of consultation	Answers received to all questions	Overall satisfaction	Willingness for future telephone consultations
Very satisfied	51	47	46	56	44
Satisfied	40	45	45	37	35
Neutral	6	6	4	2	10
Dissatisfied	3	2	3	4	3
Very dissatisfied	0	0	2	1	8

- Obtained all required information from the comfort of their own home
- Avoiding exposure and spread of infection
- Reducing personal cost and inconvenience of attending a hospital appointment

# Results: Clinician perspective

80% stated telephone consultations took same amount of time or shorter

84% felt preparation for telephone consultations required the same or less amount of time

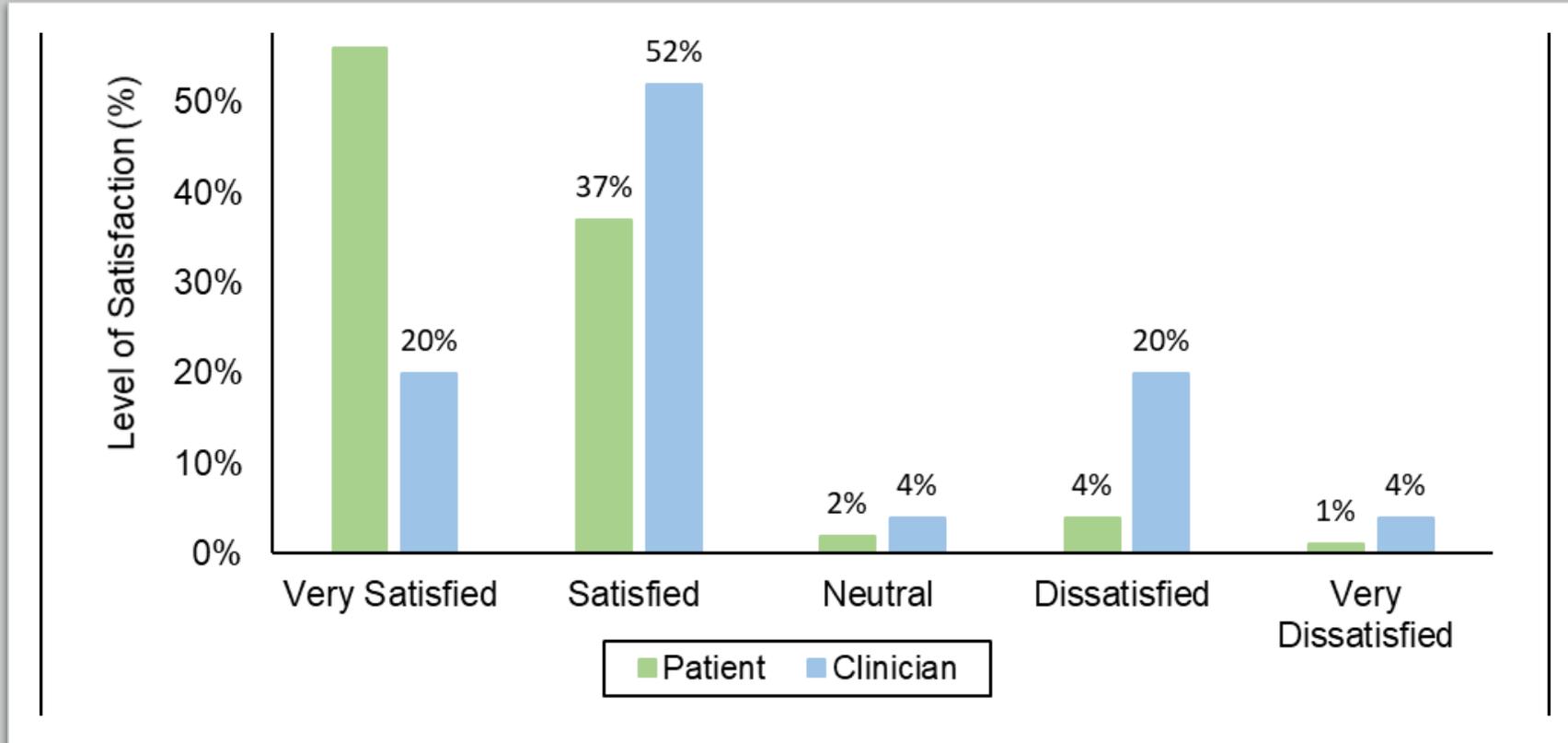
68% reported it was a less comprehensive medium

60% found it the same or easier to explain diagnosis and management plans over the telephone

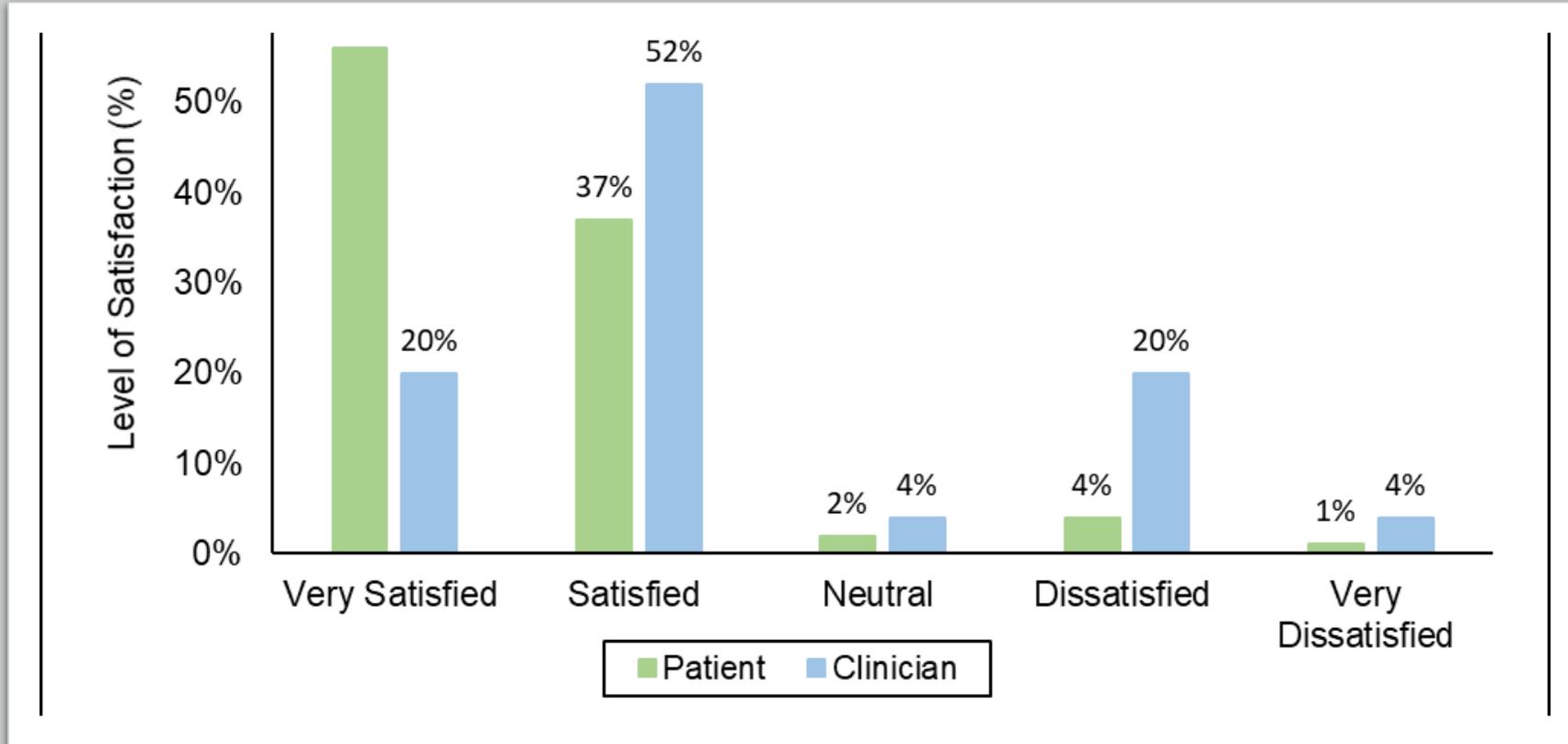
76% were satisfied with the opportunities for patient questions.

72% of clinicians reported overall satisfaction with telephone consultations

80% were willing to continue this method of consultation in the future



**Overall satisfaction levels with telephone consultations**



**Willingness to continue telephone consultations in the future**

# Statistical Analysis

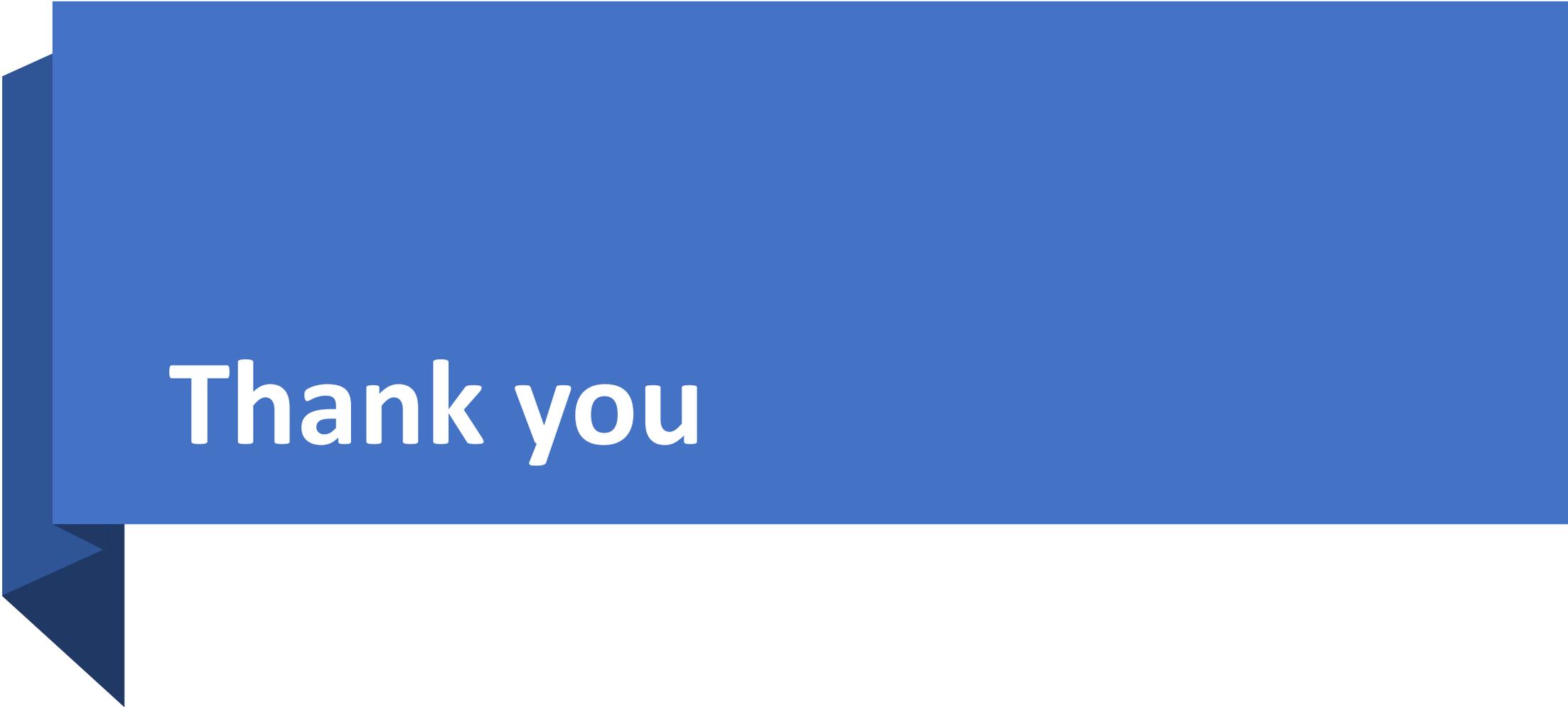
- No statistical significant difference in the level of satisfaction between:
  - Age groups
  - Gender
  - Diagnosis of upper or lower limb injuries
- No statistical difference between willingness for telephone consultations during the current pandemic and willingness for telephone consultations in the future

# Discussion

- A useful tool to stratify risk for each patient
- Help identify those who require a face to face consultation
- Help identify those who can be provided with advice over the telephone and signposted to resources online
- Limitations
  - Lack visual feedback
  - Inability to view imaging
  - Clinicians require a very different skill set in comparison to face to face consultations
    - *Adequately assess patients but inadequately reassure them due to the lack of visual cues*

# Conclusion

- Can be implemented rapidly to provide high quality healthcare during these unprecedented times
- Resulted in immense patient and clinician satisfaction
- Safe and effective alternative to face to face consultations
- A tool that will have benefits in the post-pandemic future
- Act as a stepping stone to the safe introduction of the more complex platform of video consulting.



**Thank you**