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### Video consultation in general practice - patients' perspective

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**Background & Aim:** Telemedicine and specifically video consultations represent a new frontier in the delivery of care in family medicine. This research aimed to assess the level of interest, preferences, perceived advantages and concerns of patients in relation to video consultations with General Practitioners.

**Method:** A questionnaire was distributed at a single primary care centre, located in rural Ireland. 214 questionnaires were completed. A literature review was also completed in relation to telemedicine and specifically video consultations in family medicine.

**Results:** Patient interest in video consultations to consult with General Practitioners is very high. 59.6% of all patients (n=214) want to use video consultations and amongst those patients who own a smartphone and use Skype it increases to 89% (n=100), with 28.8% of this group being very interested. 91.3% of patients who want video consultations are aged 18 - 55. Younger patients find it more difficult to find time to attend their GP (p=0.003). Patients who find it difficult to attend their GP more frequently use internet search engines for information on symptoms and management (p=0.001). 23.4% of patients have concerns in relation to video consultations, with the main categories of concern being 1) Data and/or Privacy, 2) Diagnosis Accuracy and 3) Lack of physical examination. The advantages from patients' perspectives were 1) Convenience, 2) Time saving and 3) No need to travel. Finally, patients would prefer to see their own regular GP via video consultation over a video consultation with a GP they had never met before and not from their usual primary care centre (p=0.000).

**Conclusions:** Video consultations in family medicine are likely in the future to become an important aspect of delivery of care. Patients interest in this service is very high. Patient preference is for their own regular General Practitioner to deliver this service.