



Patient Satisfaction with Telehealth Consultation in the Breast Reduction Population

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Introduction

Telemedicine or telehealth is a rising technology that has allowed for healthcare access to populations with social barriers to traditional care. Recent interest in telemedicine has increased in the setting of the COVID-19 pandemic as healthcare systems investigate ways to provide adequate care while protecting patients and workers from unnecessary infectious exposure. Although some institutions have offered telemedicine for perioperative care and recorded good outcomes, few have studied its role in plastic surgery as the initial consultation nor assessed patient satisfaction in a systematic way. This study uses a standardized questionnaire to survey breast reduction patients' perspectives on using telemedicine for the first clinic visit.

Methods

Telehealth visits with a physician assistant were conducted using the Amwell telehealth platform (Boston, MA) and consisted of a full history, patient counseling, and referrals to physical therapy and mammography as needed. An in-person follow-up visit with the senior author closer to the surgical date was scheduled for pre-operative exam. Post visit, patients were asked a standardized set of 16 questions assessing their satisfaction with key aspects of their visit, 10 of which comprise the satisfaction with medical team module of the Body-Q and the other 6 were specific to the telehealth aspect of the visit.



Results

21 women were surveyed after their telehealth consultation, occurring between November 2020 and May 2021. Mean age was 35.33 years (range 20-62 years). 57.1% of patients were white, 28.6% were black, and 14.3% were Hispanic or other. 95.2% of women surveyed responded completely to the questions. The average score on the satisfaction with medical team module of the Body Q was 94.38 (range 38-100). When asked about their satisfaction with telehealth, 95.4% of patients definitely agreed that their privacy was protected and that they could communicate effectively with their provider, 90% definitely agreed that they had a thorough evaluation, 90.5% definitely agreed that all of their questions and concerns were addressed, 76.2% definitely agreed that the technology was easy to use, and 85.7% definitely agreed that they were satisfied with their care. 95.2% of patients at least somewhat agreed with the prior six statements (Figure 1).

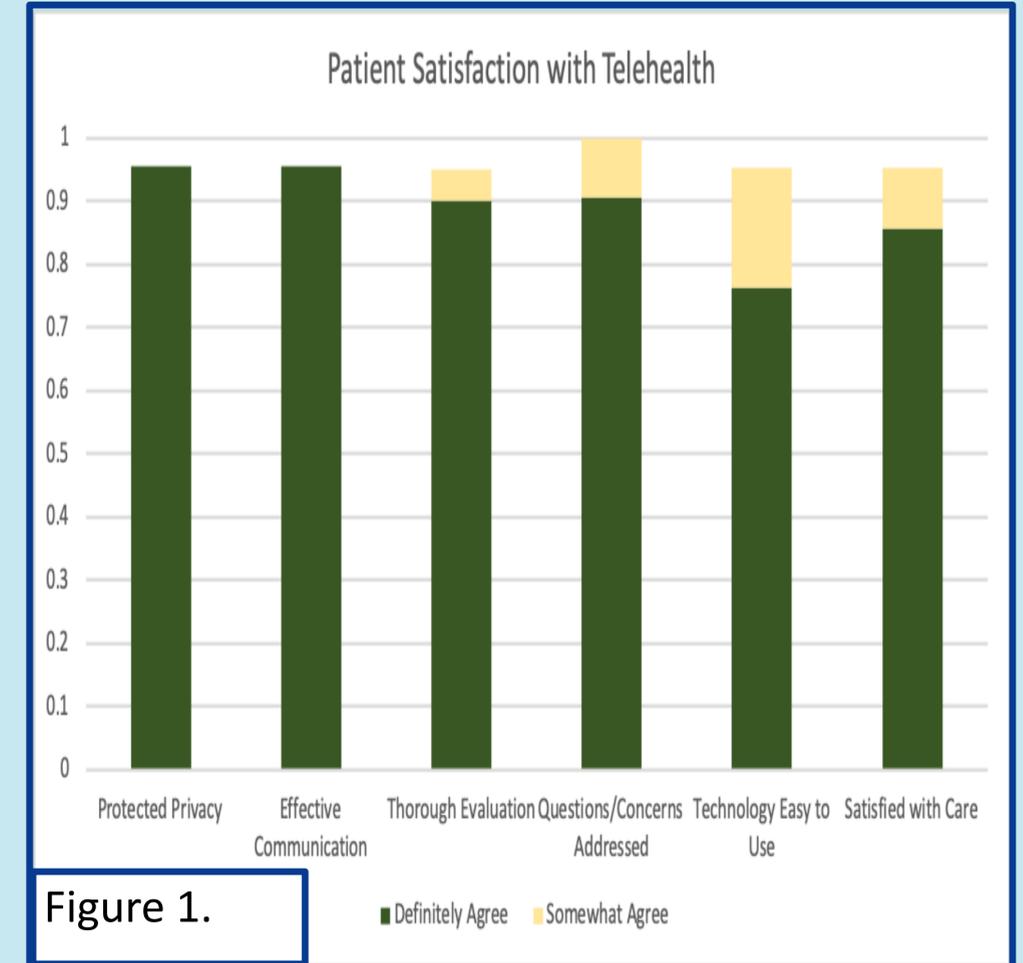


Figure 1.

Conclusions

Breast reduction patients are generally satisfied with multiple aspects of their initial consultation when conducted via telemedicine. This modality should continue to be used to increase safe access to expert counseling for the breast reduction population.

