

SPEECH PATHOLOGY OUTPATIENTS AND THEIR SUPPORT PERSONS IMPRESSIONS AND SATISFACTION WITH TELEHEALTH SERVICES

Joondalup Health Campus

AUTHOR

Melinda John
Senior Speech Pathologist
CPSP

Introduction

With the onset of COVID-19 pandemic social distancing restrictions in WA hospitals including Joondalup Health Campus in 2020 and subsequent years, direct patient attendance at speech pathology outpatient appointments was reduced, with the introduction of previously unfamiliar and minimally used telehealth intervention.

Telehealth intervention included the use of audio only (phone, zoom without video) interventions and audio plus visual (Zoom) interventions. As Zoom interventions were relatively unfamiliar at their onset to patients and therapist alike, a review of the impressions and satisfaction of patients and their support persons using this service was indicated to inform its application in the future.



Methodology

A survey was disseminated via email and hard copy to patients accessing the Speech Pathology outpatient service who had received telehealth intervention. It was composed of a combination of nominal, 5 point Likert scale and open ended questions.

The survey was designed by the Speech Pathologist author and aimed to maximize participation by those with a communication impairment based on aphasia friendly guidelines. This included non-complex language, reduced verbosity, appropriately sized and spaced text with an appropriate amount of white space to maximize visual accessibility.

Results

- A total of 29 surveys were completed, composed of 21 male and 8 female respondents
- Average age of participants was 70.4 years with a range of 44-81
- Respondents received interventions for dysarthria (16), aphasia (15), dysphonia (15) and dysphagia (7)
- Respondents received telehealth services via Zoom individual session (13), Zoom group session (24) and using a phone (3)
- 21 of 29 respondents had not used telehealth previously
- 23 of 29 respondents agreed or strongly agreed it was easy to set-up and use telehealth
- 24 of 29 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that instructions provided were useful
- 23 of 29 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their Speech Pathologist provided good support in helping to set up and use telehealth
- 25 of 29 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their Speech Pathologist was skillful using telehealth
- 25 of 29 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would use telehealth again
- 12 of 29 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they preferred telehealth over face to face appointments
- 21 of 29 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that telehealth was better than expected
- 24 of 29 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that overall they were satisfied with the telehealth service

Conclusion

Despite the small sample, this study supports the overall positive impression given by participants of the use of telehealth as a means of providing services during COVID -19 restrictions and beyond.

Most participants used Zoom for the first time with their Speech Pathologist and were satisfied overall with the telehealth services, skill of the therapist using telehealth and instructional materials.

Although respondents were mostly open to using telehealth services again, their feedback was mixed as to whether they preferred telehealth over face to face appointments.

This study provides evidence towards the acceptance of services provided via telehealth and ensures that should these services be used in ongoing practice, we are confident of patient satisfaction using this method of service delivery.

Acknowledgements

JHC Speech Pathology outpatient clinicians - Julia Cordell, Jenna French, Sarah Baildon, Jacqueline Smith

Funding Attributions

Partial funding provided by CAHO PPP Allied Health Capacity Building Grants

