

Video consulting with your patients



Professor Trisha Greenhalgh
on behalf of the IRIHS
research team

University of Oxford



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?**

✓ 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

✘ Inappropriate

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



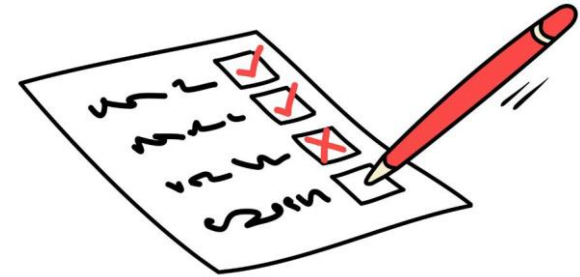
Practice meeting (by video)

2



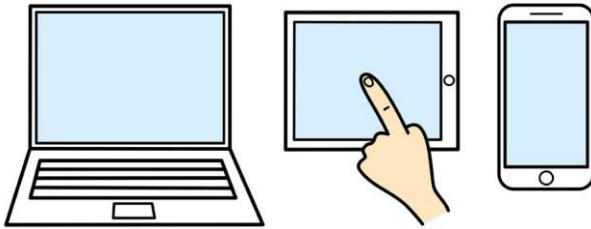
Manager, clinicians, admin staff

3



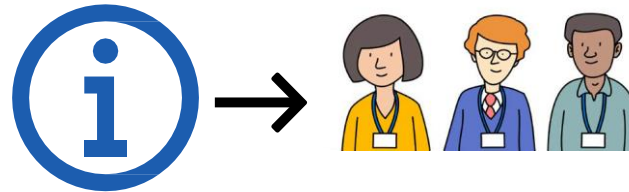
Agree what kind of appointments will be done by video

4



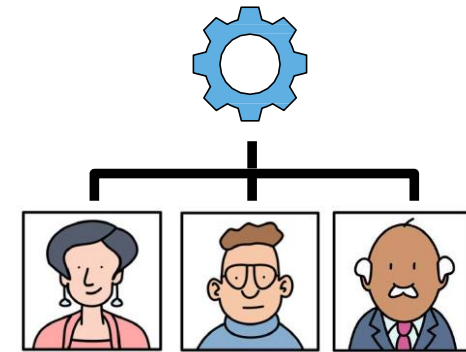
Agree what hardware and software will be used

5



Ensure staff know about the plans and their concerns are heard

6



Develop links with local technical support team

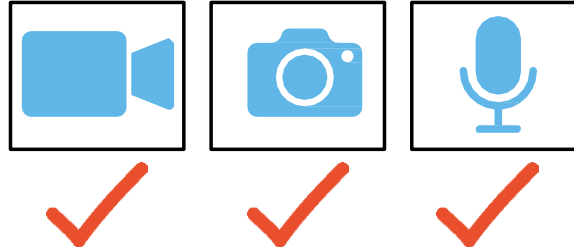
Set up the technology

7



Good internet connection
Preferably, fast broadband

8



Select and install software and
peripherals e.g. webcam, microphone

9



Check hardware and software are up
to date and audio/video is working

10



If working remotely, ensure read /
write access to practice records

11



Prepare information for patients on
what technology they need

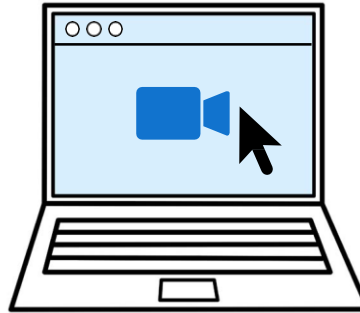
Set up the workflows

12



Update practice website with information on video appointments

13



Update clinic templates to show availability for video appointments

14



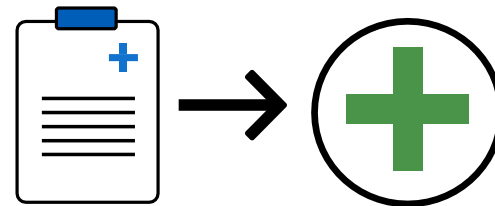
Create appointment code for a [COVID] video consultation

15



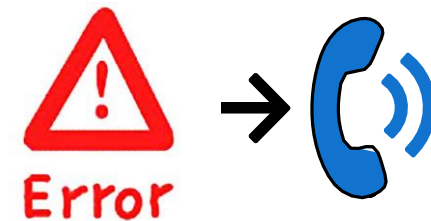
Put process in place for scheduled and unscheduled appointments

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

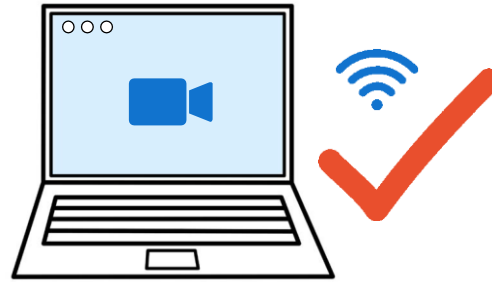
Training and piloting

18



Staff training: on-the-job,
peer led, team-based

19



Provide clinicians with all the kit in
their rooms, or use a shared room

20



Test technical aspects by
making a dummy call

21



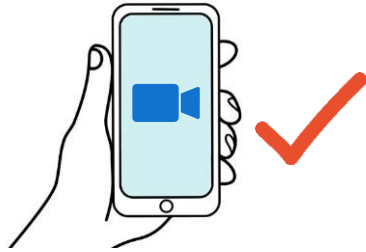
Test the process, including making
an entry on patient's record

3.

**How do I do a high-quality
video consultation?**

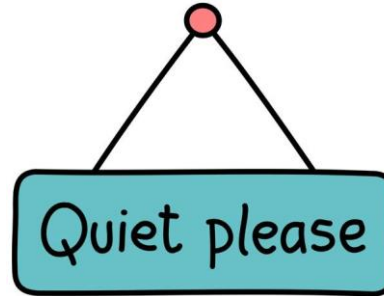
Before the consultation

1



Confirm that a video consultation seems clinically appropriate

2



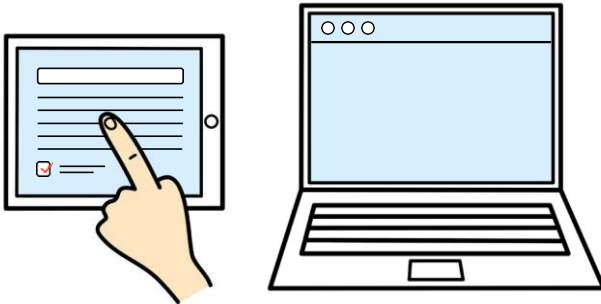
Use a private, well-lit room and ask your patient to do the same

3



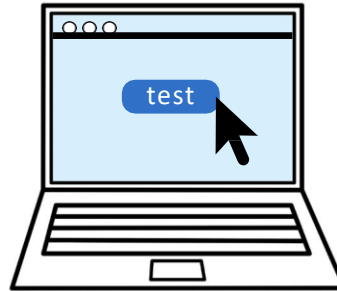
Check you've got patient's phone number in case video link fails

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

6



Initiate the consultation e.g.
click on url

7



The start can be a bit awkward.
Help patient if necessary.

8



Take verbal consent for video
consultation; record COVID-related

9



Introduce anyone off camera.
Ask patient to do the same

10



Reassure patient that consultation
will be similar to a standard one

Having a videoconsultation

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



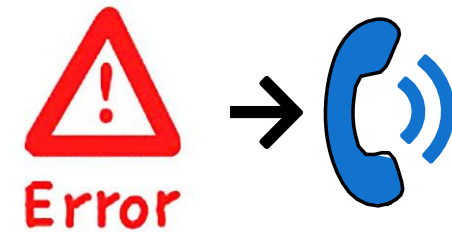
Make written records as you would in a standard consultation

15



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

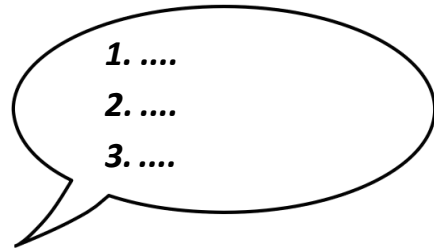
16



If the video or audio link fails and you can't reconnect, phone the patient

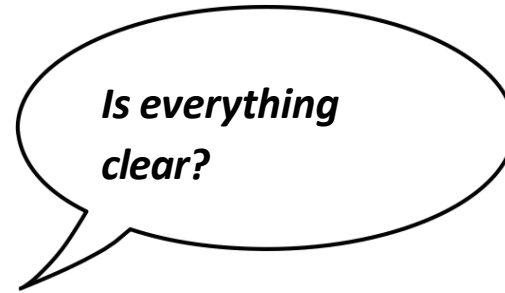
Closing the consultation

17



Summarise carefully (something could have been missed)

18



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?

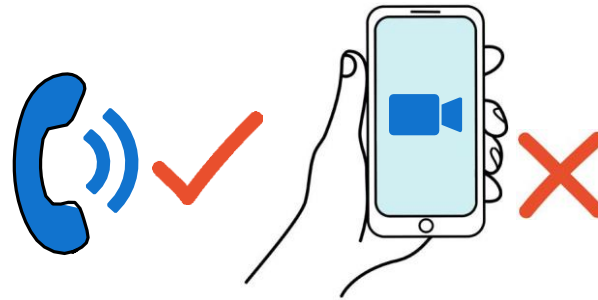
Consider if video is needed at all

1



For general advice, use the web, e.g. Google 'NHS coronavirus advice'

2



For many consultations, a phone call will do

3



Video provides more information and can be more reassuring

4



Their doctor or nurse may be self-isolating and working by video

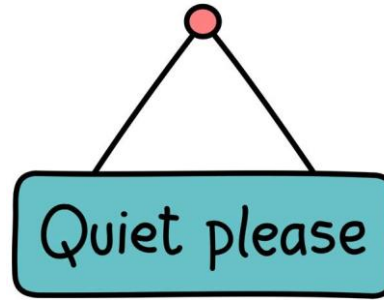
Get set up technically

5



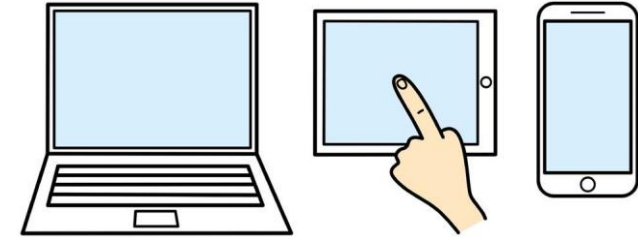
A good internet connection

6



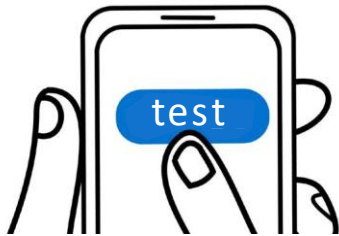
A quiet place where they won't be disturbed

7



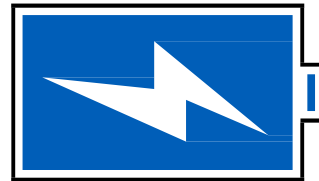
Computer, tablet or smartpone with built-in camera and microphone

8



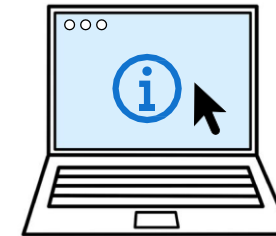
Test and adjust audio and video connection (relatives can help)

9



Check all equipment is fully charged or connected to a power supply

10



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



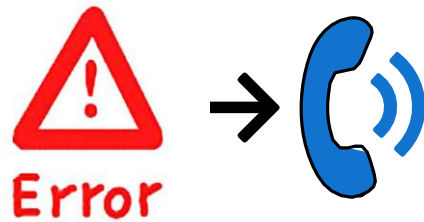
If all goes well, the call will feel like a face to face appointment

17



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

18



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

Funders



Contributors

