

Patients experience better treatment with digital consultations

Authors: Zanaboni P, Fagerlund A.

More than half of users of digital services provided by their GP said the quality of treatment improved with the possibility of e-consultations.

Six out of ten patients find it easier to write electronic messages to their GP's office on non-medical matters than to call.

Just over four out of ten find it easier to explain clinical issues to their GP in writing than having to do so verbally. 24% prefer traditional consultations. These are some of the findings of a Norwegian study of user experiences with digital GP services, such as

electronic appointment bookings and prescription renewal, digital non-medical requests and text-based e-consultations.

Common service

Many GP offices now offer digital services via their website. Some patients benefit from similar services via helsenorge.no login. Participants in the study were recruited from users of at least one of the services via helsenorge.no.



Almost three of four patients said the quality of treatment improved, according to the study. (Illustration photo: Colourbox).



37% of users who took part in the study had had a text-based e-consultation with their GP. Almost three in four patients believed that an e-consultation led to better follow-up care, and 58% believed quality of treatment improved with the possibility of e-consultations.

Not unexpectedly, eight out of ten patients found it easier and more efficient to book an appointment electronically than over the phone, and more than nine out of ten find it easier to digitally renew their prescriptions.

Almost half of those who had renewed their prescription electronically believed it contributed to greater adherence to their medication.

More time

In a previous study among GPs, researchers found that most of them found that digital services free up time for patients, office staff and doctors alike. GPs also pointed to better accessibility through e-consultation, and especially better opportunities to follow up on care for chronically ill patients.

Figures from the Norwegian Directorate of Health show that in June and July 2020, e-consultations such as video consultation or digital communication via text messages accounted for 21-22% of all consultations. The pandemic contributed to a 35-41% increase in March and April.

The Norwegian Directorate of Health and Accenture have estimated that around 30% of all GP consultations in the future will be e-consultations, with up to 40% using m-health, using mobile devices for self-measurement or recording personal health data.



– Regarding digital inquiry to the doctor, patients ask for some form of receipt that it has been received, and what happens with it, says researcher Asbjørn Fagerlund.
(Photo: Helene Baustad)

References

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For more information, contact:

Paolo Zanaboni, Senior researcher
+47 915 54 636
paolo.zanaboni@ehealthresearch.no

Asbjørn Johansen Fagerlund, Researcher
+47 976 04 709
asbjorn.johansen.fagerlund@ehealthresearch.no

