

Title: Evaluation of patient experience of virtual telephone consultation for routine diabetes care during COVID-19 and future clinic preference

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic saw a rapid implementation of virtual clinics to reduce risk of exposure to the virus in outpatient settings. While this was acceptable to patients with diabetes mellitus in the short term, it is unclear how patients feel about virtual clinic substitution as normative practice.

Aim

Aim of this evaluation is to examine the switching from face-to-face outpatient clinics to ‘virtual clinics’ for routine diabetes care during COVID-19 pandemic.

Method

This is a cross sectional prospective survey design using postal questionnaires.

The questionnaire containing a CSQ and PEI and some bespoke questions of experience of telephone consultations and future preferences. Patients were recruited from Diabetes outpatient clinic if

- they had experience of at least one virtual clinic telephone consultation
- had prior experience of face-to-face consultation.

Key
CSQ = Consultation Satisfaction Questionnaire
PEI = Patient Enablement Instrument

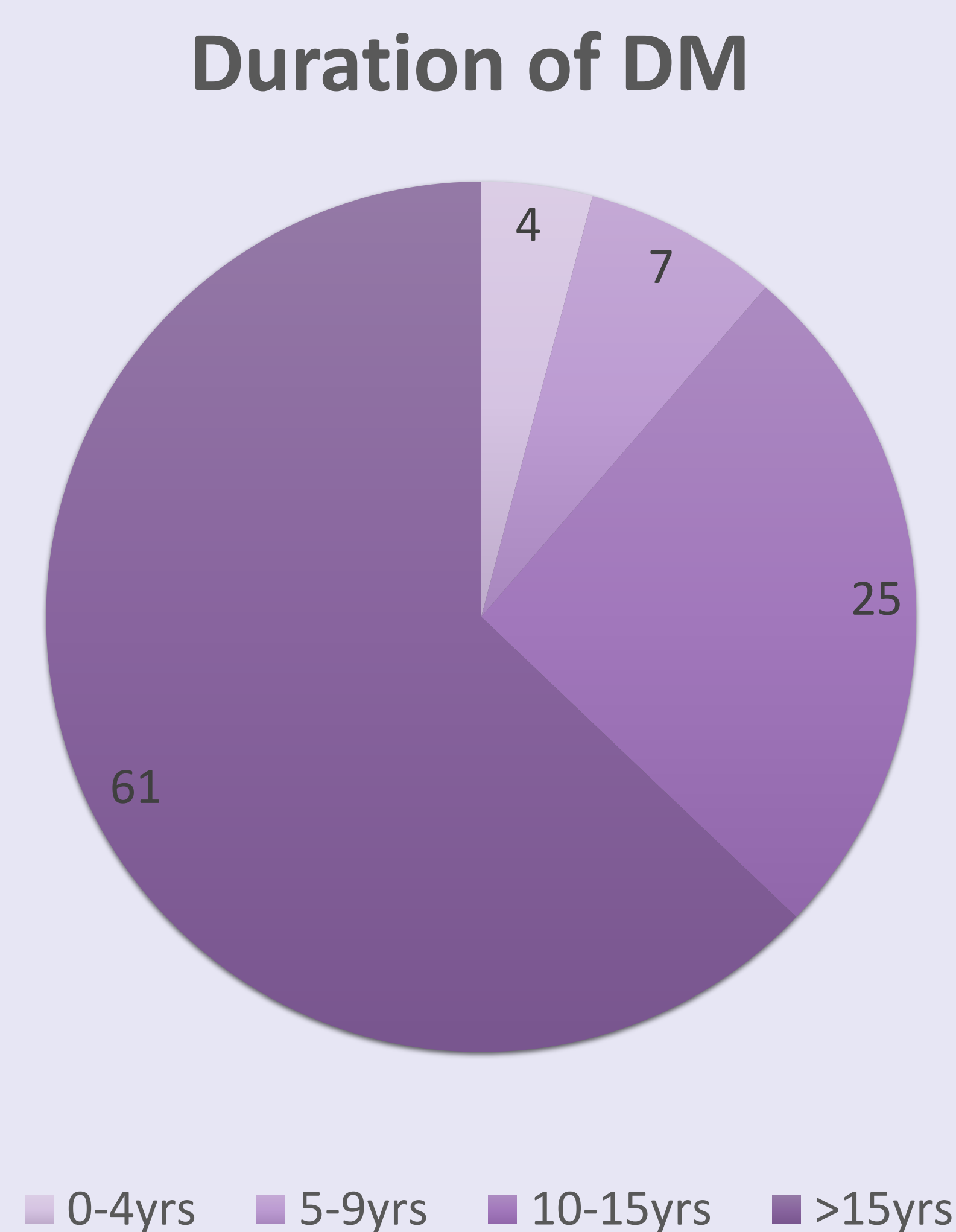
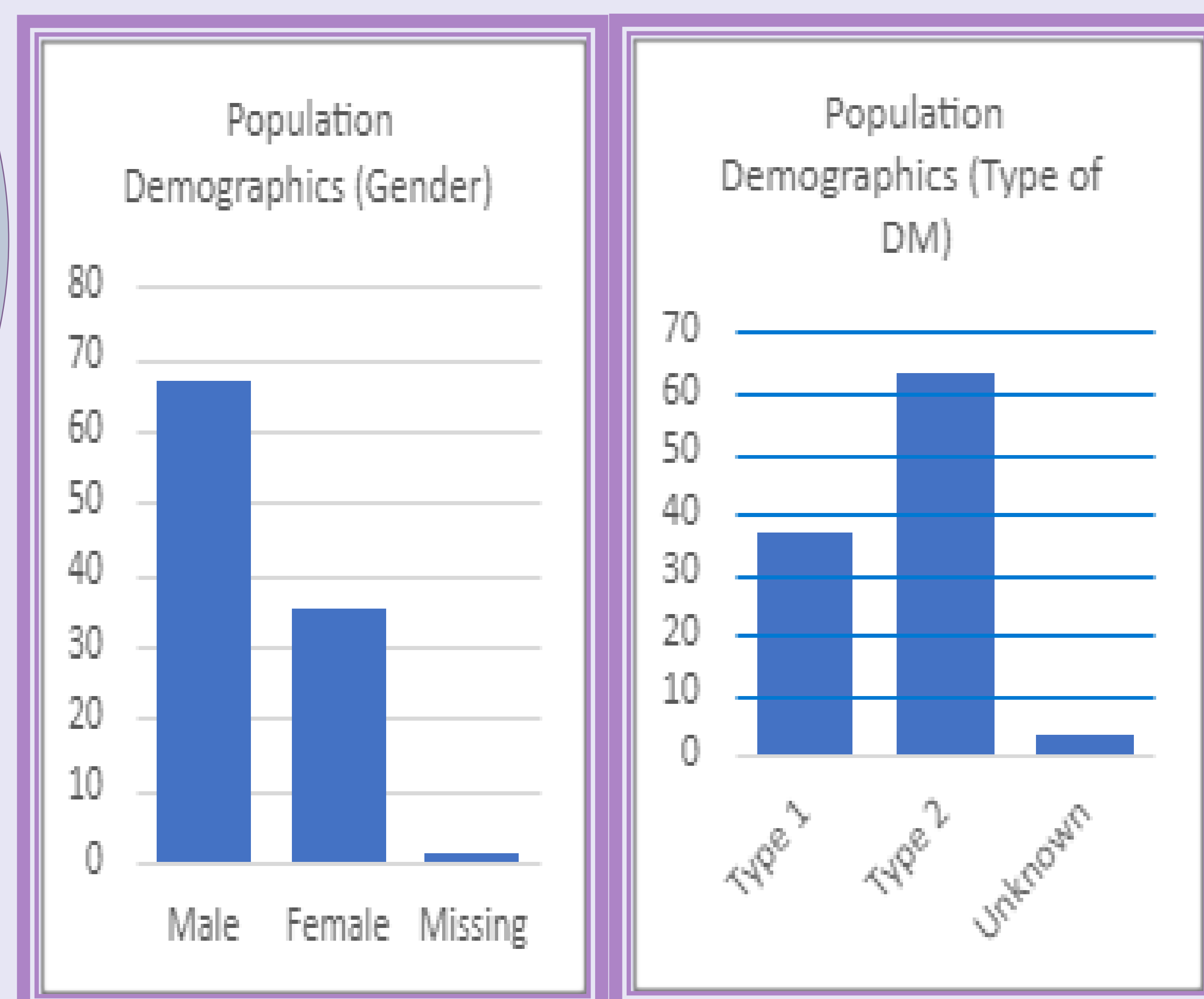
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Results

- In total 242 questionnaires were distributed
- 103 were included in the analysis.
- Over 80% described good or very good outcomes from telephone consultations
- 10% indicated a preference for telephone only consultations to continue.
- The main reasons given were a lack of personalisation and physical assessments.
- There was a trend for younger women with Type I diabetes to prefer at least some virtual consultation substitution.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated that face-to-face consultations remains a strong preference but there is a place for telephone consultation substitution, particularly with the younger type 1 diabetes population.



What we learned

- 10% wanted to continue with telephone only consultations
- 46% wanted a blend of telephone and face to face consultation.
- The multidisciplinary, face to face clinic is highly valued by this population group.
- Patients are prepared to substitute some OPD reviews with virtual consultations.
- Respondents that expressed an interest in continuing with some telephone consultations tended to be younger women with type 1 diabetes mellitus which was probably due to their busy lifestyles.