

Case Study: Using online questionnaires to reduce unnecessary face-to-face appointments in Oncology

My Online Care is an innovative project aiming to reduce unnecessary face-to-face follow up appointments whilst continuing to safely manage ongoing outpatient care. It is piloting in three varied specialities: Oncology, Breast Services, and Trauma and Orthopaedics. The aim is to improve patient experience, improve clinical outcomes, and achieve financial efficiencies.

Why are we doing this in Oncology?

National bodies advocate a reduction in face-to-face outpatient visits with a focus on the use of technology to drive this change. Online questionnaires are one tool that can be utilised to determine whether a patient needs a face-to-face appointment.

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust has the largest Oncological facility in the East Midlands. Oncology is a predominantly outpatient speciality with steadily increasing outpatient activity resulting from increased cancer incidence, improved survival rates and an expanding repertoire of treatments. A large proportion of oncology follow-up clinics consist of monitoring patients on treatment, this is where this project will focus. Patients have the choice to complete these online questionnaires at home rather than attend hospital, to allow remote monitoring of their health.

This project proposes completed questionnaires could be reviewed by clinicians in virtual clinics to determine patients' requirement for face-to-face review, thereby reducing unnecessary face-to-face appointments.

Method

A feasibility study needed to be conducted to ensure the questionnaires were safe for patients to use before allowing them to be completed at home. The study involved digital toxicity questionnaires being answered by patients and their clinicians alongside face-to-face appointments. Patients and clinicians could not see each other's results, and the results were not used for clinical decisions. Agreement between patients and clinicians was assessed through statistical analysis. Patient and staff feedback was also obtained.

Aim

Assess agreement between patient and clinician acute toxicity PROM questionnaires:
To determine whether acute toxicity PROM questionnaires can safely be utilised as a triage tool to determine whether a patient needs a face-to-face review.

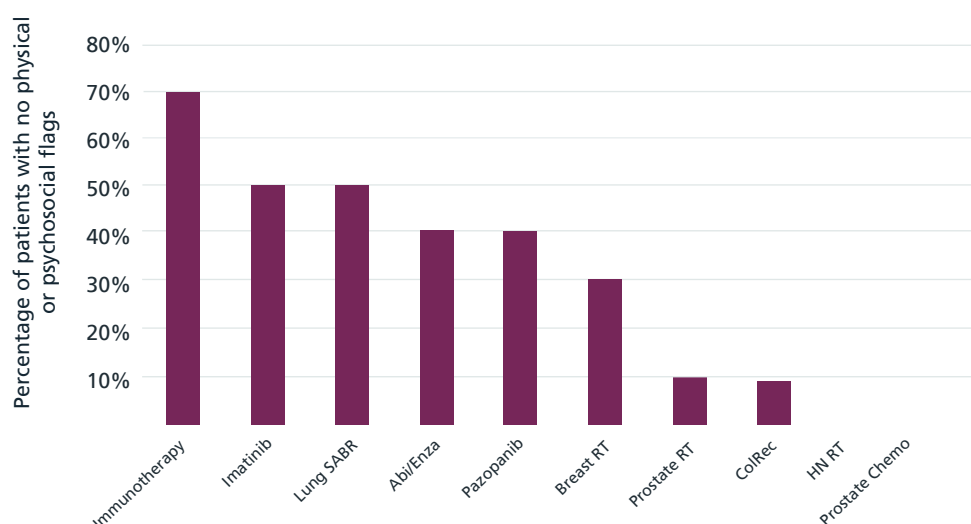
Outcomes

The Oncology feasibility study has generated positive results. Questionnaires performed well with 96.7% of questionnaires flagging appropriately. No patients with severe symptoms were missed. Questionnaires content and what constitutes a 'flag' have been amended to further increase the percentage of patients flagged appropriately.

Potential face-to-face reductions

Potential face-to-face reductions across oncology based on the questionnaire results were high.

Potential face-to-face reduction in the oncology treatment sites



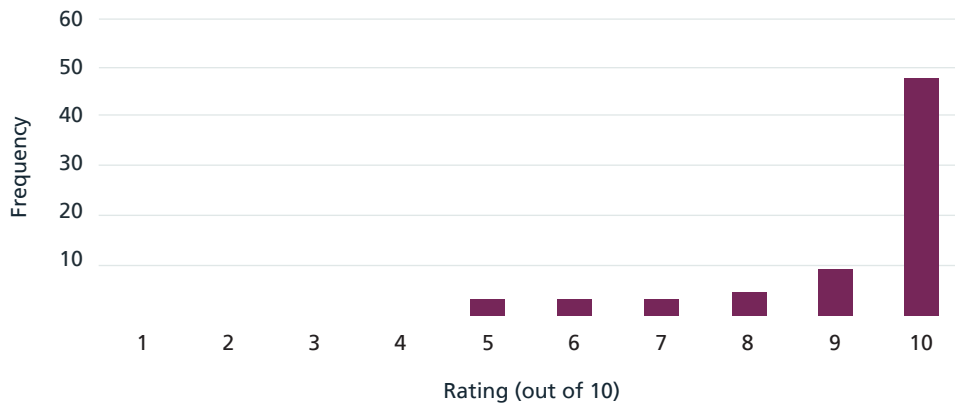
Patient feedback

Patient feedback about digital questionnaires and their use for remote monitoring has been positive, as seen from the below results of the three questions we asked.

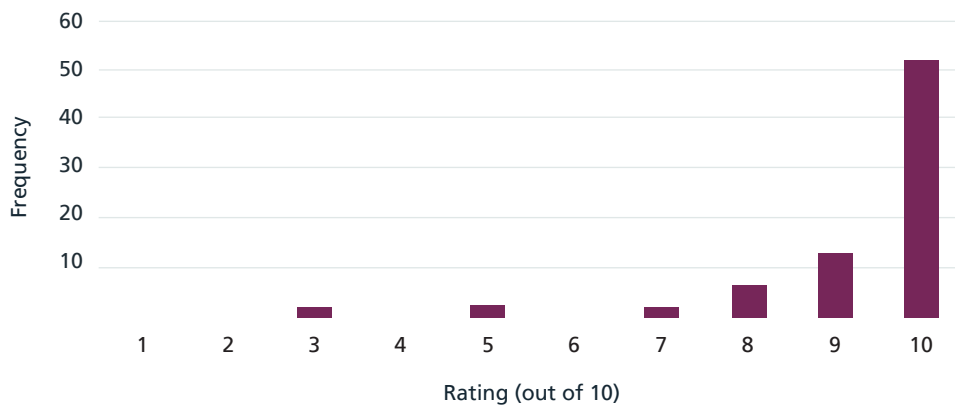
Would you be happy to use these digital questionnaires routinely to supplement your care?



Did the questions cover everything you would normally discuss at clinic?



How confident were you with reading and answering the questions on the tablet?



Patient focus groups have been conducted to obtain qualitative patient data about this proposed project. One representative comment was: *"Your work is very important to us oncology patients and I personally would like to thank you for helping to improve our journeys"*.

Staff feedback

100% of staff gave a score of 8/10 or more for usability and completeness of the questionnaires.

80% of staff gave a score of 10/10 for considering using these questionnaires to remotely monitor patients.

Next Steps

A supervised pilot is the next phase to 'go live' with the developed system. This will test the system from start to finish, and collect benefits needed to scale and spread My Online Care throughout the hospital.

My Online Care



In collaboration with

DrDoctor



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