



TELEHEALTH BY ALLIED HEALTH PRACTITIONERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

AN AUSTRALIAN WIDE SURVEY OF
CLINICIANS AND CLIENTS

APRIL 2021



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Executive summary

Client Survey



388 clients from all states and territories in Australia completed the survey.

70% were female.

Client age ranged from 3 to 79 years.

38% were parents or carers completing on the clients behalf.

Clients received telehealth care from...



■ Speech Pathologists ■ Diabetes Educators ■ Accredited Exercise Physiologists ■ Occupational Therapists ■ Osteopaths ■ Podiatrists



90% had no telehealth consults prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.



81% preferred in-person consults rather than telehealth.

Experiences with telehealth consults via video and telephone...



89% and 80% of clients were somewhat or very satisfied with consults.

87% and 86% of clients rated consults as somewhat or very effective.



83% and 86% of clients found the technology somewhat or very easy to use.



85% and 80% of clients were somewhat or very comfortable communicating with their clinician via telehealth.



80% and 77% of clients felt very safe during telehealth consults.

69% and 74% of clients were very satisfied with privacy and security during consults.



44% and 40% of clients felt it was somewhat or very likely that they would choose to access care via telehealth in the future.



84% and 70% of clients were somewhat or very likely to recommend the clinician to others based on their telehealth consult experience.

12% and 9% rated consults somewhat better or much better quality than in-person consults.

Advantages of telehealth....



Reduced travel time/burden



Less waiting time



Greater access to care



Convenience



Some clients benefit from staying at home



Continuity of care during pandemic



Undivided attention from clinician

Disadvantages of telehealth...



Technical / internet issues and limited access to technology



Not all treatments / assessments are possible



Children may be disengaged and distracted



Less effective than in-person consults



Impersonal / difficulty building relationships



Lack of visual input / relies on client communication

Clinician Survey



868 clinicians from **all states and territories** in Australia completed the survey.

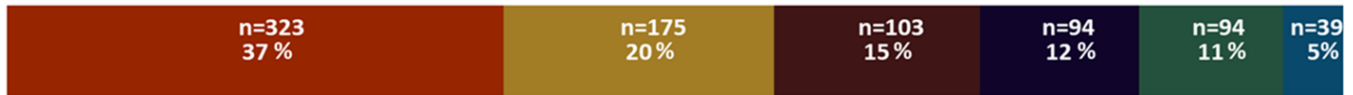
86% were female.

Clinicians had an average **10 years** clinical experience.

58% worked in a private practice setting.

42% had undertaken training in the delivery of telehealth.

18% provided video consults and **52%** provided telephone consults before COVID-19



■ Speech Pathologists ■ Accredited Exercise Physiologists ■ Diabetes Educators ■ Occupational Therapists ■ Osteopaths ■ Podiatrists

On a scale of 0 (not at all confident) to 10 (extremely confident)...



Clinicians scored an average **8/10** for confidence delivering telehealth via video



Clinicians scored an average **8/10** for confidence delivering telehealth via telephone

On a scale of 0 (not at all effective) to 10 (extremely effective)...



On average, clinicians rated video consult effectiveness **8/10**



On average, clinicians rated telephone consult effectiveness **7/10**

On a scale of 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied)...



Clinicians rated their satisfaction with care delivered via video an average **8/10**



Clinicians rated their satisfaction with care delivered via telephone an average **7/10**

Plans to offer future consults via **video** and **telephone**...

81% and **63%** of clinicians plan to offer telehealth consults after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Clients unsuitable for consults via **video** and **telephone**...

85% and **60%** of clinicians had deemed one or more client unsuitable for telehealth consults.

Common reasons for deeming clients **unsuitable for telehealth**...



Technical / internet issues or no access to technology



Client required hands-on treatment



Complexity of client / condition

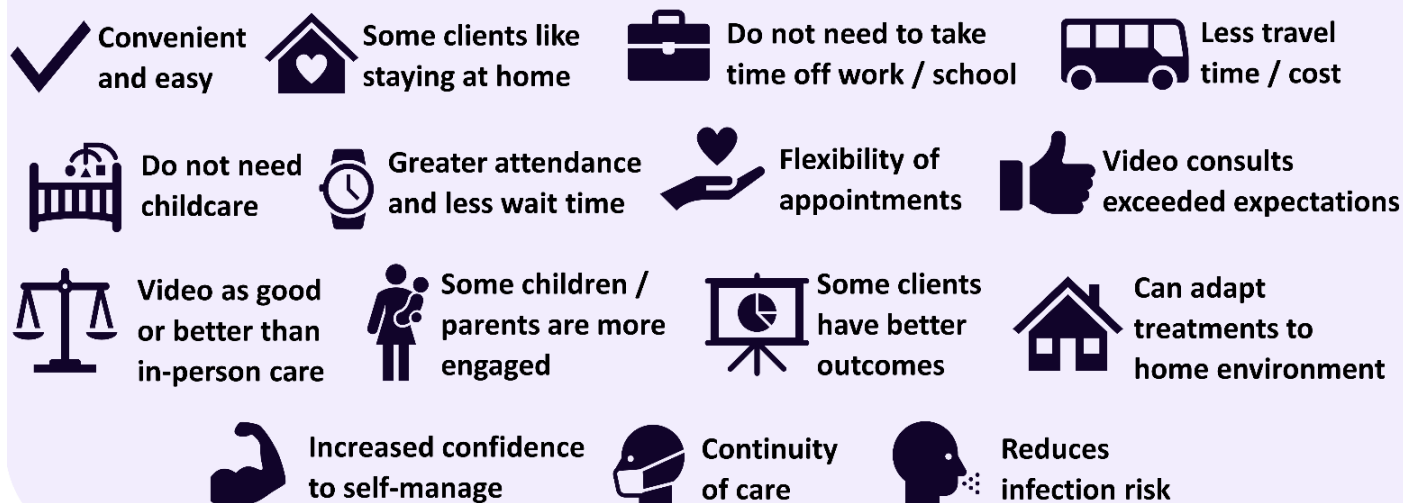


Unable to assess / diagnose accurately

Positive feedback about **video** and **telephone** consults...

83% and **48%** of clinicians had received positive feedback about telehealth consults.

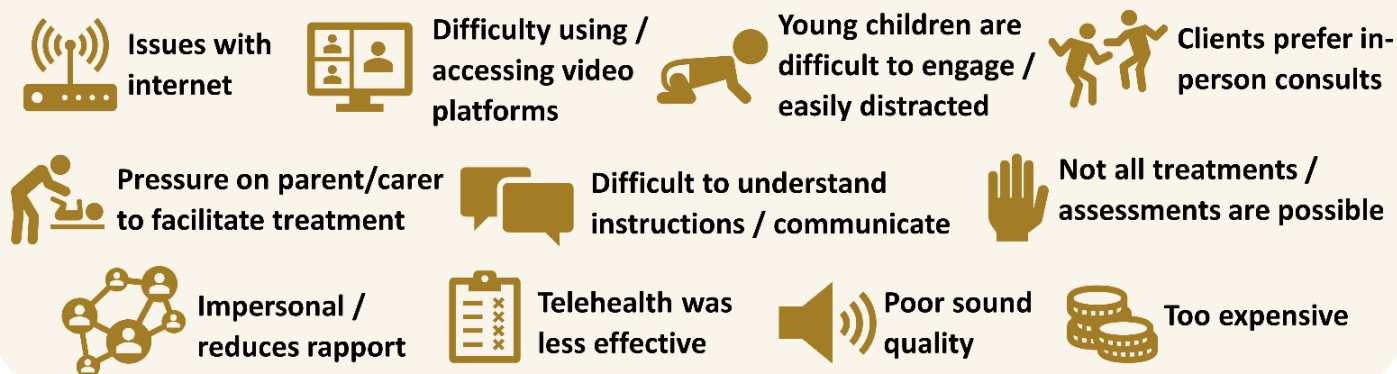
Common positive feedback about telehealth consults...



Complaints and negative feedback about **video** and **telephone** consults...

24% and **10%** of clinicians had received complaints or negative feedback.

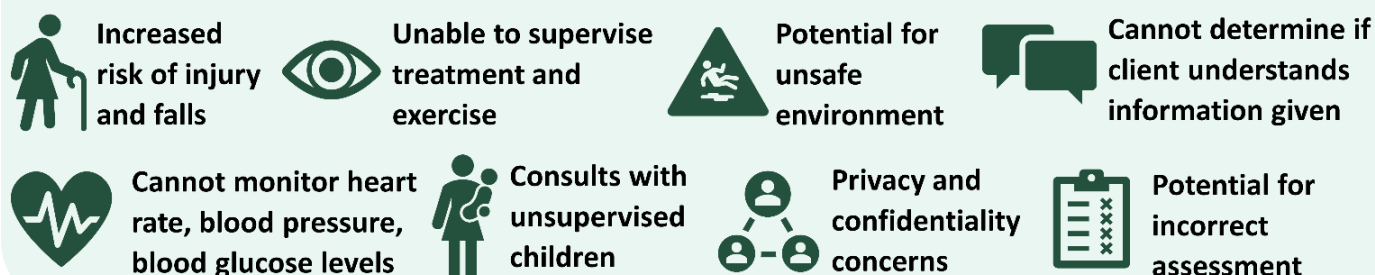
Common **complaints** and **negative feedback** about telehealth consults...



Safety concerns during **video** and **telephone** consults...

13% and **10%** of clinicians reported safety concerns.

Safety concerns related to telehealth...



Key Findings



Clients, caregivers and clinicians from all Australian states and territories completed the survey.



90% of clients and 82% of clinicians used telehealth for the first time during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Only 42% of clinicians had undertaken training in the delivery of telehealth.



Most clients and clinicians were satisfied with the care they received or provided via telehealth.



Most clients found telehealth easy to use, were comfortable communicating via telehealth, and were satisfied with the privacy and safety of telehealth consults.



4 in 5 clinicians planned to continue offering telehealth video consults after the COVID-19 pandemic.



1 in 2 clients were likely to choose to see their allied health clinician via telehealth after the COVID-19 pandemic.