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MEDIA RELEASE

The patient will see you now!

Most are comfortable with treatment during pandemic

Medical Technology Group survey shows patients are embracing technology during the Covid-19 pandemic, but value real-life consultations

Most patients (59 per cent) would feel comfortable going to hospital for an operation or treatment despite the Covid-19 pandemic, a survey of over 400 patients by the Medical Technology Group has revealed.

Younger patients are more comfortable with the prospect of attending a hospital appointment than their elders, with nearly eight out of ten 18-34 year olds (75 per cent) stating that they were 'extremely', 'very' or 'somewhat' comfortable, compared to 59 per cent of those aged 65 and older.

Nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) of patients surveyed had either had a procedure - such as surgery, an investigation, or a treatment - or a GP or outpatient appointment postponed in the previous six months. Instead, the vast majority (85 per cent) had experienced some form of communications technology, such as a telephone or online video consultation since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Over two-thirds (67 per cent) found the experience of using this technology to be positive, describing it as either 'excellent' or 'good'. Six out of ten (58 per cent) said that communications technology compared favourably with face-to-face contact with their clinician, citing benefits such as eliminating the risk of infection (79 per cent) and avoiding the need to travel (75 per cent), as well as it being cheaper (42 per cent). However, half of patients said they did not feel like they received a proper consultation (50 per cent) and a quarter (27 per cent) missed the social interaction.

Among those respondents who had experienced another form of medical technology such as a joint or heart valve replacement, cardiac stent, or surgical cancer treatment like

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radiotherapy (136 out of 401 respondents), eight of ten (78 per cent) said that it has a 'great deal' or 'a lot' of impact on their life.

Other findings from the research include:

- Two-thirds of respondents (65 per cent) said they would prefer minimally-invasive procedures, such as keyhole surgery, interventional cardiology, or radiology procedures to more invasive procedure, with seven out of ten (70 per cent) agreeing that it would help them get back to normal life more quickly; meanwhile six out of ten (63 per cent) believe it would speed up their recovery.
- Among those patients who use wearable or implantable medical technology (39 out of 411 respondents), such as a blood pressure monitor, pacemaker, or insulin pump, nearly two thirds (64 per cent) described it as 'extremely important' during the pandemic. Over half (56 per cent) cited the ability to manage their own condition as a benefit of this medical technology, with four in ten (39 per cent) stating that they do not need to visit hospital as often.

Barbara Harpham, Chair of the MTG, said, "This research clearly shows that patients value the role that medical technology has played during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"While virtual consultations are a good substitute for face-to-face appointments for discussing medication, referrals, and minor ailments, when it comes to diagnosis or physical examinations, there is no substitute for face-to-face appointments. More work needs to be done to determine precisely how this technology is used to help in the future.

"Patients' experience of wider medical technology is extremely positive. It shows the role that medtech can play in getting the NHS back up and running, harnessing its benefits to build a better health service. Used properly, medical technology can get patients back to normal life quicker, make the NHS more efficient, and benefit society as a whole."

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About the research

The survey was conducted online among UK adults (aged 18 to 75+) between July 6 and August 10, 2020 and was promoted via patient groups, including the Patients Association, Parkinson's UK, and Heart Valve Voice, as well as the Medical Technology Group's social media and digital channels. 437 responses were collected from individuals who identified as having a pre-existing medical condition. The majority of respondents (78%) were aged over 55.

About the Medical Technology Group

The Medical Technology Group (MTG) is a coalition of patient groups, research charities and medical device manufacturers working to make medical technologies available to everyone who needs them. Uptake of medical technology in the UK is not as good as it should be, given its great potential to provide value for money to the NHS, patients and taxpayers. The MTG believes that patients and clinicians need better information about medical technologies so that they can make informed choices about their medical care.

<http://www.mtg.org.uk>