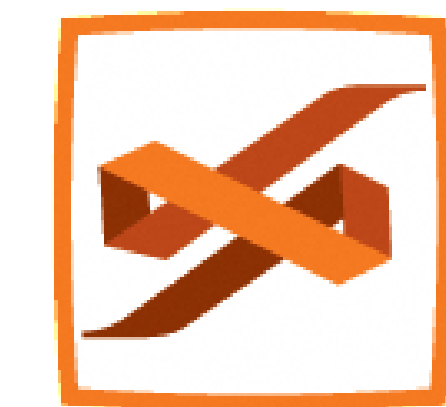




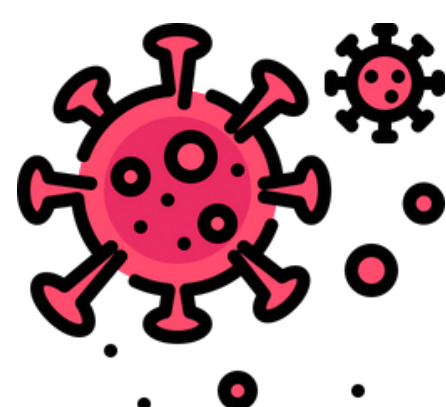
Singapore Healthcare Management 2021

Synchronizing Video Consultation with Medication Counselling / Review



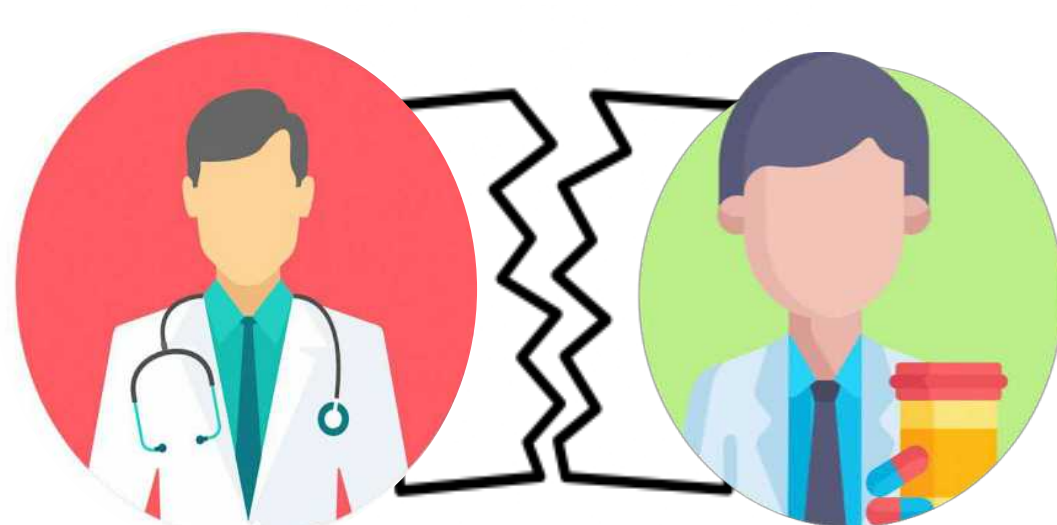
Polyclinics
SingHealth

Joanne Chua, Maksim Lai, Lee Wan Sian, Cheang Wai Siong, Sy Li Chin, Chan Jin Ming, Thoo Wen Chien, Lim Wei Ee



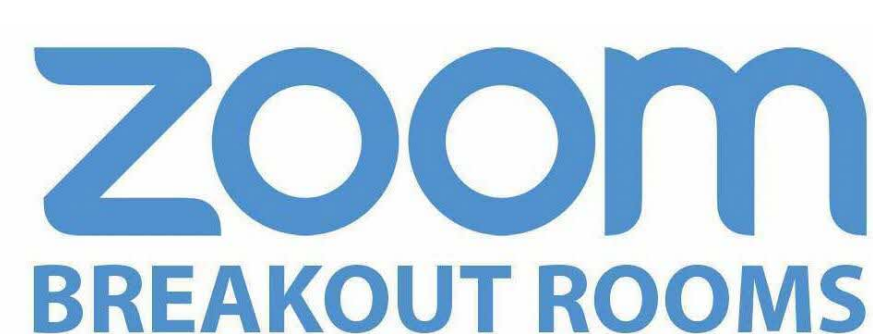
The COVID-19 pandemic had accelerated the development of teleconsultation due to the urgent need to reach out to patients who are hesitant to visit polyclinics.

With the existing virtual care delivery model of only doctors performing teleconsultation, there was a time lag and disconnect between doctor's video consultation and pharmacist's dispensing. This results in pharmacy having to expend time post-virtual consultation in re-establishing contact with the patients. Often, due to technology limitations and/or the dependence on caregivers, the pharmacy staff have to counsel medications via the telephony modality with the patients



Telephone counselling of medications, though simple and convenient, posed a challenge in assessing compliance and understanding of patients due to the absence of visual cues. This was especially apparent in patients with more complex medications and/or had multiple brand changes in medications.

Faced with such fragmented virtual care for patients, Outram Polyclinic leveraged on technology to ensure value add and seamless healthcare delivery.



Introduction

The team capitalised on the usage of Zoom's breakout room function by getting pharmacists on board for teleconsultation. With the aid of Zoom and the electronic prescription function of the pharmacy dispensing system, these facilitated virtual transfer of patients from the doctor to the pharmacist and sequential medication counselling / review without the need for physical prescription. The breakout room concept mimicked the current physical settings and allowed a seamless transfer of care from one healthcare provider to another.

PATIENT **DOCTOR**

Doctor

- After consultation, transfer patient to breakout room where pharmacist is in it

PATIENT **PHARMACIST**

Pharmacist

- Check through prescription
- Join the breakout room
- Medication counselling / review

Methodology

Since October 2020, 111 tele-medication counselling/ review sessions had been conducted by Outram Pharmacy using the Zoom breakout room modality.

Pharmacists involved shared that it was easier to communicate medication changes to patients via video consultation and interventions could be made in a timelier manner. Doctors could also provide instant clarifications and encountered fewer downstream problems due to the seamless process.

Over 90% of patients who had a verbal survey during the initiation phase preferred the new arrangement of synchronized video consultation with medication counselling/ review. An online survey form was subsequently created and sent out to patients seen in Nov - Dec 2020. 28 out of 78 patients (36%) responded. The results of the survey were presented in the table below. Generally, the feedback received had been positive and encouraging. This motivated us to strive further to enhance the service and reach out to more patients.

Questions asked	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not applicable
The process of contacting the pharmacist directly after the doctor's consultation was simple and convenient.	21	7			
The pharmacy staff treated me with courtesy and respect during the video dispensing session	24	4			
I feel at ease speaking with the pharmacy staff about my medications in the video dispensing session	23	5			
The pharmacy staff was able to address any concerns that I had in the video dispensing session.	23	5			
The pharmacy staff explained the medications in a clear and concise manner.	22	6			
The images of medications shown by the pharmacy staff helped me to understand my medications.	18	8			2
My experience of the video dispensing session is comparable to that of a face-to-face dispensing session.	23	5			

We had also encountered multiple obstacles such as adapting to new technology, limitations of infrastructure and space, weak WiFi signal at pharmacy area and manpower constraint. Despite these, the team managed to resolve and overcome them.

Result

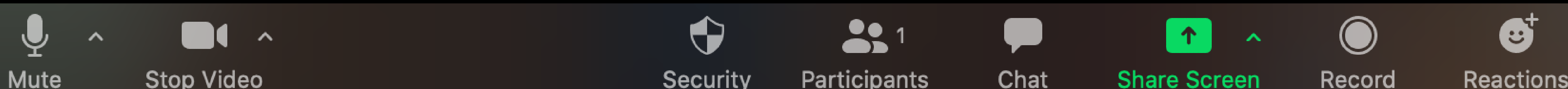
With virtual consultation complementing physical one, SingHealth Polyclinics (SHP) were able to ensure adequate provision of care while maintaining safe distancing for our patients. Through innovative use of technology, Outram Polyclinic team hoped to enhance patient's virtual care experience by achieving a seamless healthcare delivery.

Moving forward, the team aspires to scale up the service and expand it to other polyclinics, making SHP the most patient centric primary care centre.



Conclusion

Adapted from Zoom Video Communications



End