

Re-designing Speech Therapy Services

Christine Chua Huiling

Speech Therapy Department, Tan Tock Seng Hospital

Background

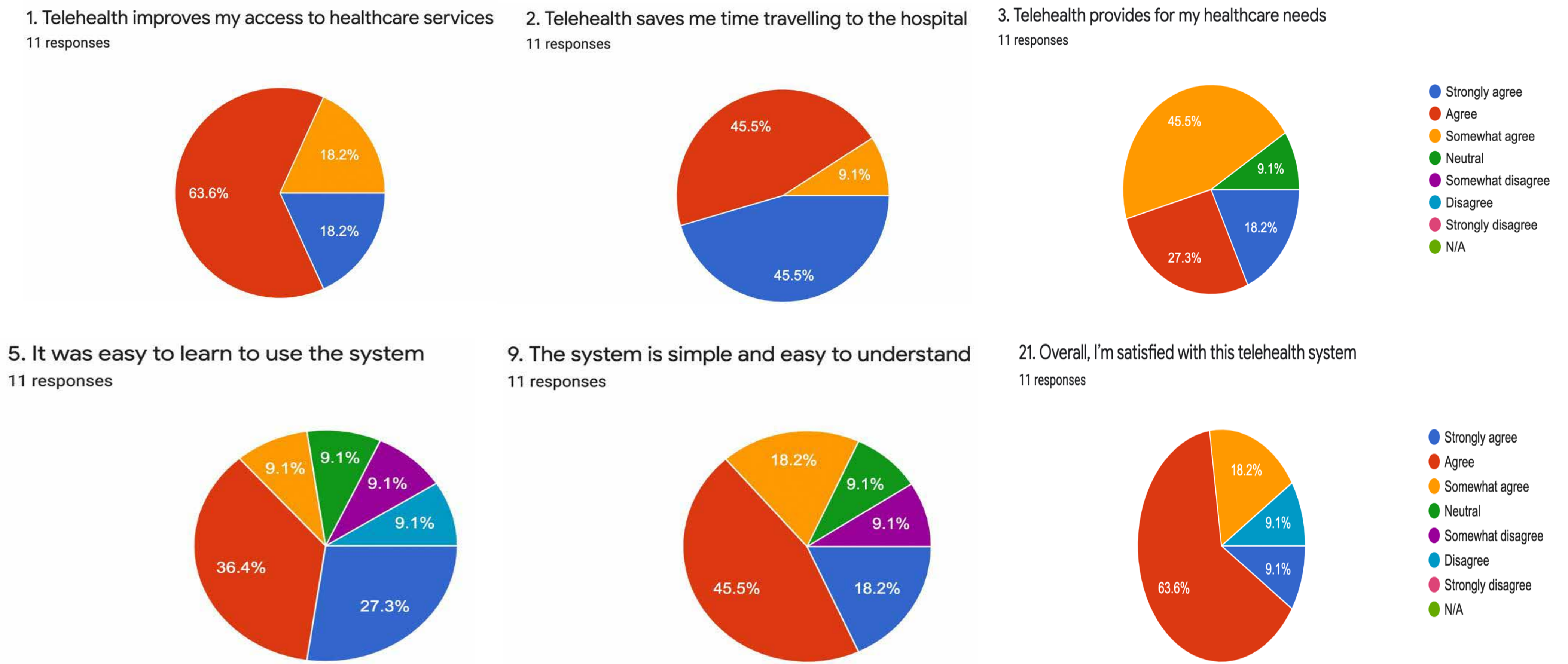
The Speech Therapy (ST) department has been using telepractice as an option for outpatients to receive speech therapy beyond the clinic environment since late 2018. Telepractice aims to minimize the need outpatient clinic attendance yet maximize patient outcomes. This resulted in process re-design, with clearer workflows for segregating essential vs non-essential cases and expanding suitability criteria for offering telepractice to patients. Clinic schedules were reshuffled, enabling the segregation of a designated telepractice room where all the necessary logistics are easily available. However there are barriers for patients to take up telepractice and patients experience with the system were not fully studied.

Methodology

Patients that had participated in the telepractice service or currently in the telepractice session were asked to participate in a no identifier online telehealth usability survey and feedback on their experience with the session. The 21 questions usability survey was adapted from University of Pittsburgh, 2012, to find out how the usability level of the system is to the patients, how fast or capable the patients able to recover if occurrence of technical issues and lastly the experience in communicating with the clinicians through the system.

Result

A total of 11 patients participated in the survey, most of the patients (>80%) were highly agreeing and in favor with the use of telepractice system for their treatment. Patients agree with the telepractice session mainly it is assessable and similar experience with the face to face sessions. However there are high concern in the telepractice setting up and technical issue. Nevertheless, most of the patients (91%) willing to use telepractice system as their therapy sessions.



Conclusion

Telepractice is getting popular and well received by the patients with the ST department who had been through the sessions. Although there are major technical barrier for the patients, since most of the patients are elderly, caregiver were guided and taught in operating the system too to better assist with the session. Telepractice system service to provide an alternate platform for therapy and communication between the clinician and patients.