Do HIV patients find remote services acceptable?  
A survey of attitudes towards digital HIV care

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INTRODUCTION
• The digitalisation of the NHS provides valuable opportunities for the engagement with ‘hard-to-reach’ populations.
• Solent NHS Trust has developed an online ‘HIV Patient Portal’ for an enhanced and secure communication of medical advice and blood results to HIV patients.
• It is important to examine the acceptability and attitudes towards remote HIV services in order to deliver the highest standards of care in a cost-effective and patient-centred manner.

AIM
To evaluate the acceptability of HIV Patient Portal as part of standard care

RESULTS
Sample characteristics (N=195):
Age: 66% between 35 and 54 years
Gender: 71% Male, 28% Female
Ethnicity: 58% White, 31% Black African, 1% Black Caribbean
Education: 3% No education, 17% High school, 27% College, 67% University
Perceived IT skills: 9% Very poor/poor, 21% Moderate, 68% Good/very good

HIV Patient Portal and telephone consultations were the most acceptable remote services for sexual health/HIV care in HIV patients.

Most HIV patients still prefer face-to-face contact, although they are receptive to using HIV Patient Portal
A substantial proportion of patients are concerned about the security and confidentiality of digital services

DISCUSSION
• There is moderate acceptability of digital services for HIV care.
• Patients who were more confident about the usability and security of online services were more likely to accept them.
• As a substantial proportion of HIV patients would still prefer face-to-face interactions, patients’ concerns should be taken into consideration when developing remote digital services.
• Future research needs to evaluate the impact of those services on care delivery and overall satisfaction.

WHAT IS A PATIENT PORTAL?
• Patient portal is a secure Web-based portal which enables access to the Electronic Health Record from PCs, laptops and other electronic devices such as smart phones and tablets.
• It is primarily for HIV patients to access information about their test results and medication history anytime and anywhere.
• It can also be used to request medication refills, request and cancel appointments, exchange messages with health care team.
• It can increase patient engagement with their care.

References:
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