



VC Links for Remote Diabetes Services Scotland | Finland | Northern Ireland

Overview

Videoconferencing (VC) is used to deliver teleconsultations as part of diabetes services where there is considerable distance between the consultant and patient. Patients attending short notice appointments, 6-monthly or annual reviews can attend clinics at a local site, remote from the diabetes consultant who is based in a central location, saving either their travel time and costs, or the consultant's.

The patient is escorted by a specialist diabetes nurse at the remote site who sends blood glucose data from the patient's meter via the internet to the consultant. A consultation can then take place via VC in a similar way to a face-to-face consultation. After the consultation, the doctor uses digital dictation to make information immediately available to the GP.

Incorporation of the specialities of podiatry, dietetics and other relevant specialties will also ensure a comprehensive service is offered to patients at remote sites.

ITTS has expanded the previous service across the Scottish Highlands and into the Orkney Islands, and started a new service in Northern Ireland.

Key points

VC for diabetes services allows local access to specialists without the patients having to travel as far, or as often for several different appointments. Readings from blood glucose meters can also be transmitted electronically.

Benefits

Consultants spend less time travelling to remote clinic sites which frees up their time to see more patients via VC or face-to-face consultations with newly diagnosed patients.



In Northern Ireland, a VC link has now been established connecting Ulster Hospital in Belfast to a remote site at Bangor Community Hospital. ITTS are working to develop service capability to allow for GP surgery links and are also investigating the potential for direct links to the patient's home.



The new VC clinics benefit both patients and medical staff by reducing waiting times, cancellations due to weather, and travel times, enabling more patients to be seen, more often.



ITTS have worked with NHS Orkney to establish new VC clinics at 3 sites across the Orkney Islands: Westray, Dounby and Hoy. Diabetes consultations are delivered from the main centre of care in Balfour Hospital (Kirkwall). A further link between the mainland hospital in Aberdeen - where the diabetes consultant is based - and Balfour Hospital will complement the service, offering a 3-way link.

In Finland, the existing video-consultation service continues to flourish between the main hospital in Oulu and 3 district sites up to 90km away, with 400-500 remote sessions per year since 2006.



ITTS Scotland have worked with NHS Highland to expand the service which currently exists between Raigmore Hospital in Inverness and Thurso Hospital, 176km to the north. New VC clinics have now been established at further sites across the Highland region: Portree Hospital (Isle of Skye) and Belford Hospital (Fort William).



Expanding Exporting

“ I think it's a great idea, it's definitely going to save travelling time. *Diabetes nurse, Scotland* ”



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