

Online Versus Face-To-Face - How Do Video Consultations Change The Doctor-Patient-Interaction

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Abstract : Since the corona pandemic, the use of video consultation has increased remarkably. For vulnerable groups such as oncological patients, the advantages seem obvious. But how does video consultation potentially change the doctor-patient relationship compared to face-to-face consultation? Which barriers may hinder the effective use of this consultation format in practice? We are presenting first results from a mixed-methods field study, funded by Federal Ministry of Health, which will provide the basis for a hands-on guide for both physicians and patients on how to improve the quality of video consultations. We use a quasi-experimental design to analyze qualitative and quantitative differences between face-to-face and video consultations based on video recordings of N = 64 actual counseling sessions (n = 32 for each consultation format). Data will be recorded from n = 32 gynecological and n = 32 urological cancer patients at two clinics. After the consultation, all patients will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about their consultation experience. For quantitative analyses, the counseling sessions will be systematically compared in terms of verbal and nonverbal communication patterns. Relative frequencies of eye contact and the information exchanged will be compared using χ^2 -tests. The validated questionnaire MAPPIN'Obsdyad will be used to assess the expression of shared decision-making parameters. In addition, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with n = 10 physicians and n = 10 patients experienced with video consultation, for which a qualitative content analysis will be conducted. We will elaborate the comprehensive methodological approach we used to compare video vs. face-to-face consultations and present first evidence on how video consultations change the doctor-patient interaction. We will also outline possible barriers of video consultations and best practices on how they may be overcome. Based on the results, we will present and discuss recommendations outlining best practices for how to prepare and conduct high-quality video consultations from the perspective of both physicians and patients.

Keywords : video consultation, patient-doctor-relationship, digital applications, technical barriers

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