

Patients' opinion on video consultations for renal outpatient clinics in NHS Dumfries and Galloway

A single-centre study

Z Khor*, R Norris*, A Almond, MK Kelly, TM Muniraju, E Rutherford, NK Rathnamalala (*Joint first author)

Renal Unit, Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary



Background

NHS Near Me via Attend Anywhere is service which enables patient consultation to be conducted via a video call. This facility can be accessed by patients using any device with an internet connection.

Usage of this service within the renal unit, NHS Dumfries and Galloway was implemented in 2018 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. We conducted patient surveys in 2018 and thereafter in January 2022 following the wide usage of the facility during the pandemic to assess patients' views before and after utilising the service.

Methodology

In 2018, a questionnaire was sent by the Renal Team to patients attending outpatient renal clinic to gauge opinion on the use of video consultations, including perceived benefits and barriers for the service. 50 responses were returned and analysed within the first study.

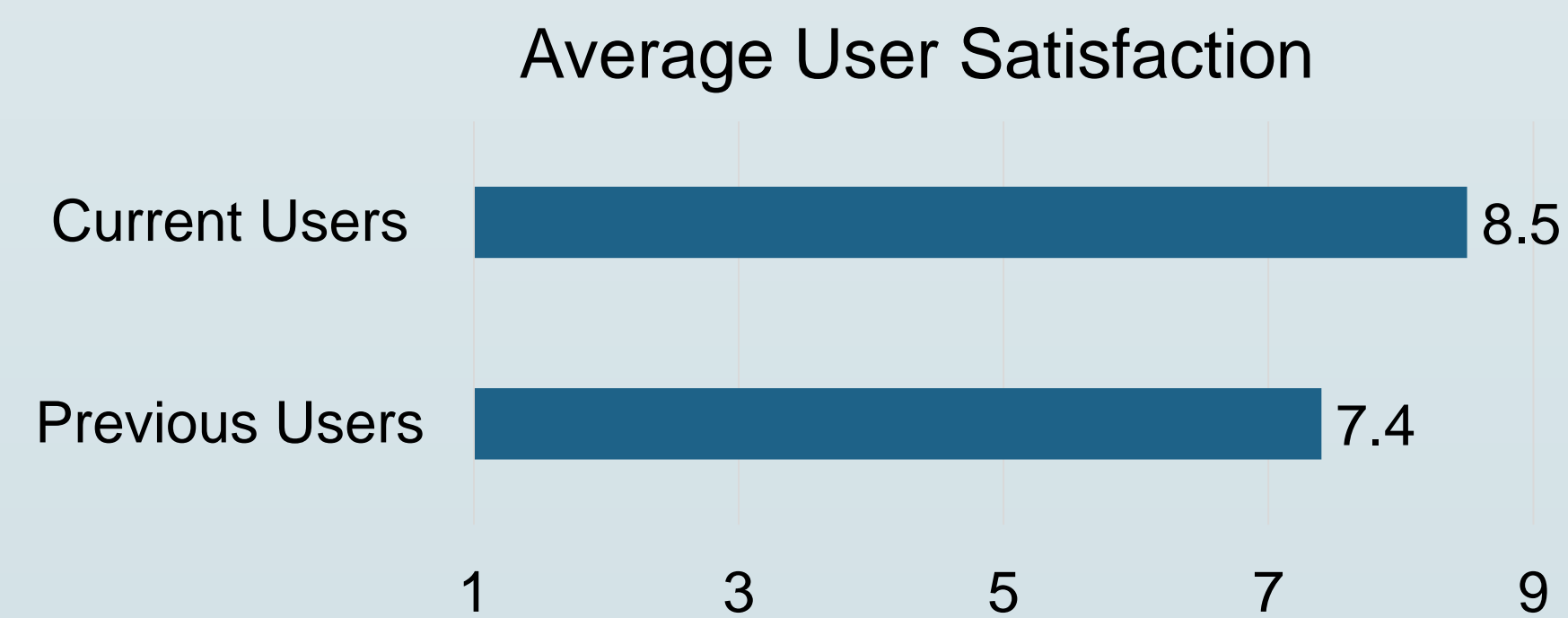
The same questionnaire was redistributed in January 2022 with modifications to identify if patients were current or previous users of the facility. The benefits and barriers which the patients were able to choose from remained the same between both studies to allow direct comparison. 50 responses were returned again but 10 were excluded due to being patients who had never used the facility prior. Data on user satisfaction, benefits of NHS attend anywhere and barriers to its use were collated within Excel for both current and previous users. Excel was used to perform statistical analysis and generate graphs.

Results

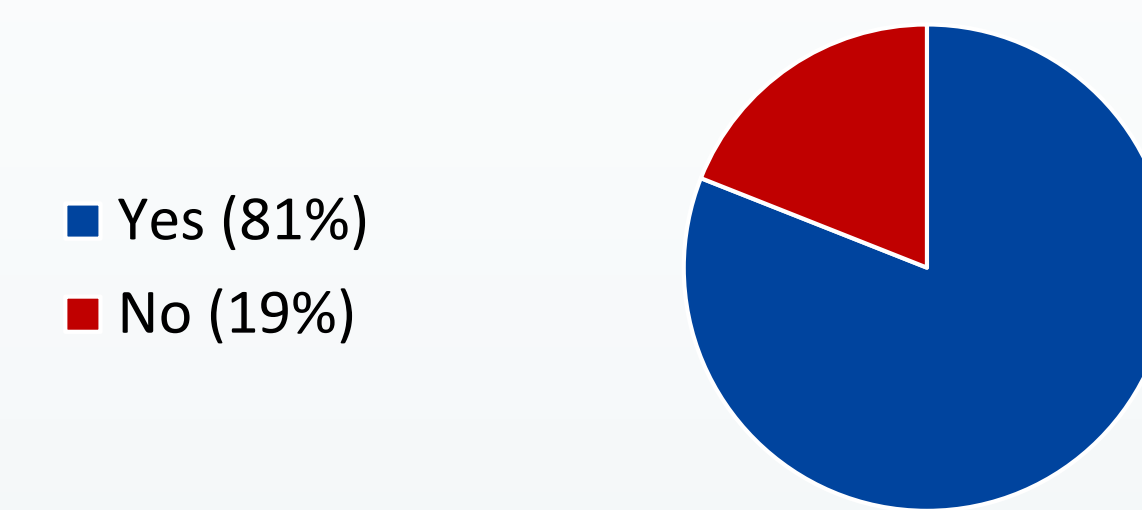
The initial survey revealed that 29 out of 50 patients (58%) showed interest in video consultations. The most common perceived benefit was that it "saves travel" (86%) whereas the commonest barrier was "preference for face-to-face consultations" (81%).

In the second survey, 16 out of 40 patients (40%) continued to use the service. The average satisfaction among the current users was 8.5 on a scale of 10 while the average was 7.4 for the previous users. Among the 16 current users, 13 of them (81.2%) wished to continue using the service while 13 out of 24 of the previous users (54%) said they would avoid video consultations in future appointments, mostly citing the "preference for face-to-face appointments" as the main reason.

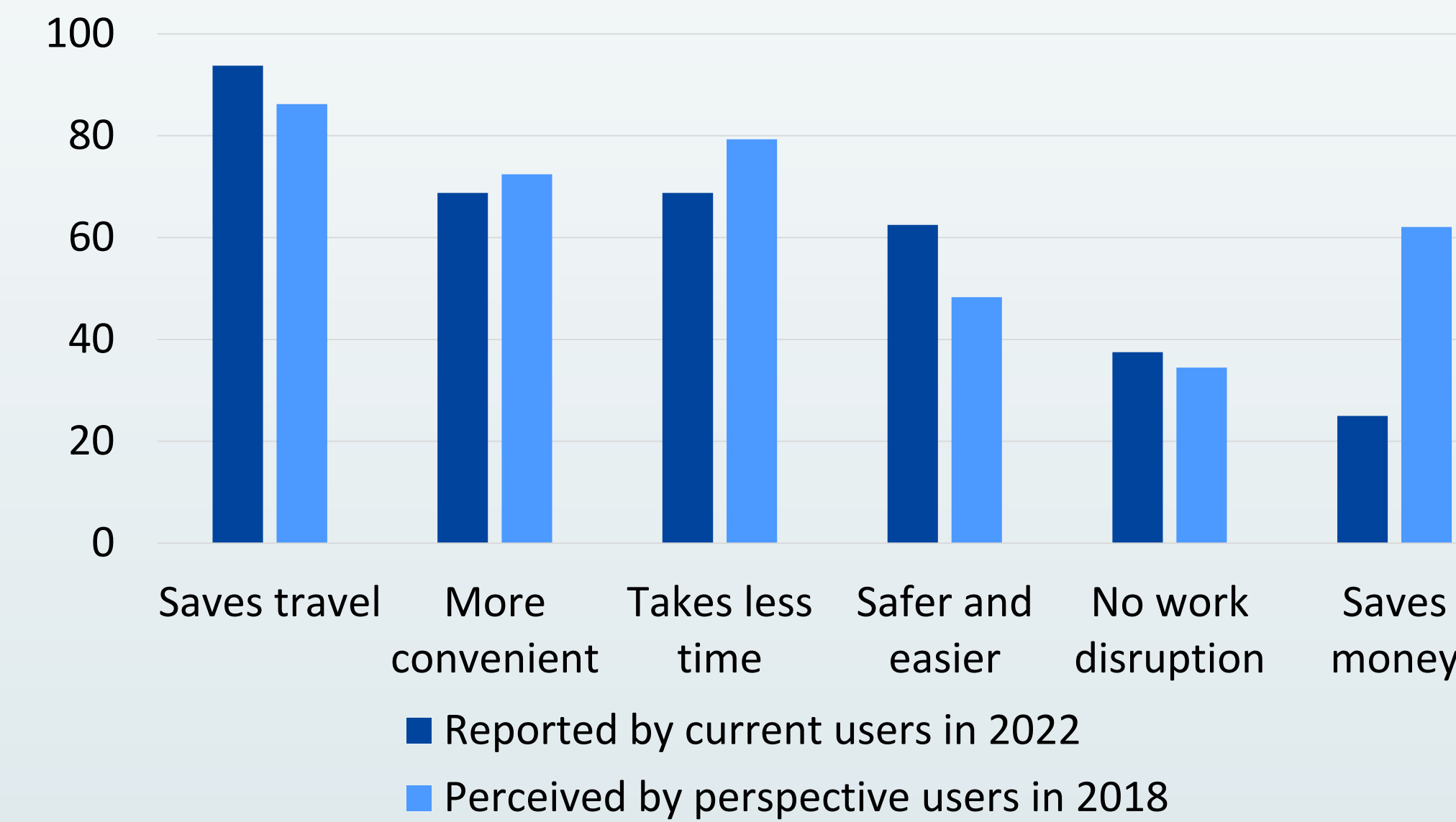
Joint data from both surveys revealed similar results for the most common benefit and barrier reported by users. Majority of previous users prefer to attend their clinic consultations in person. The lack of confidence with technology among patients is also another notable issue shown by data from both surveys.



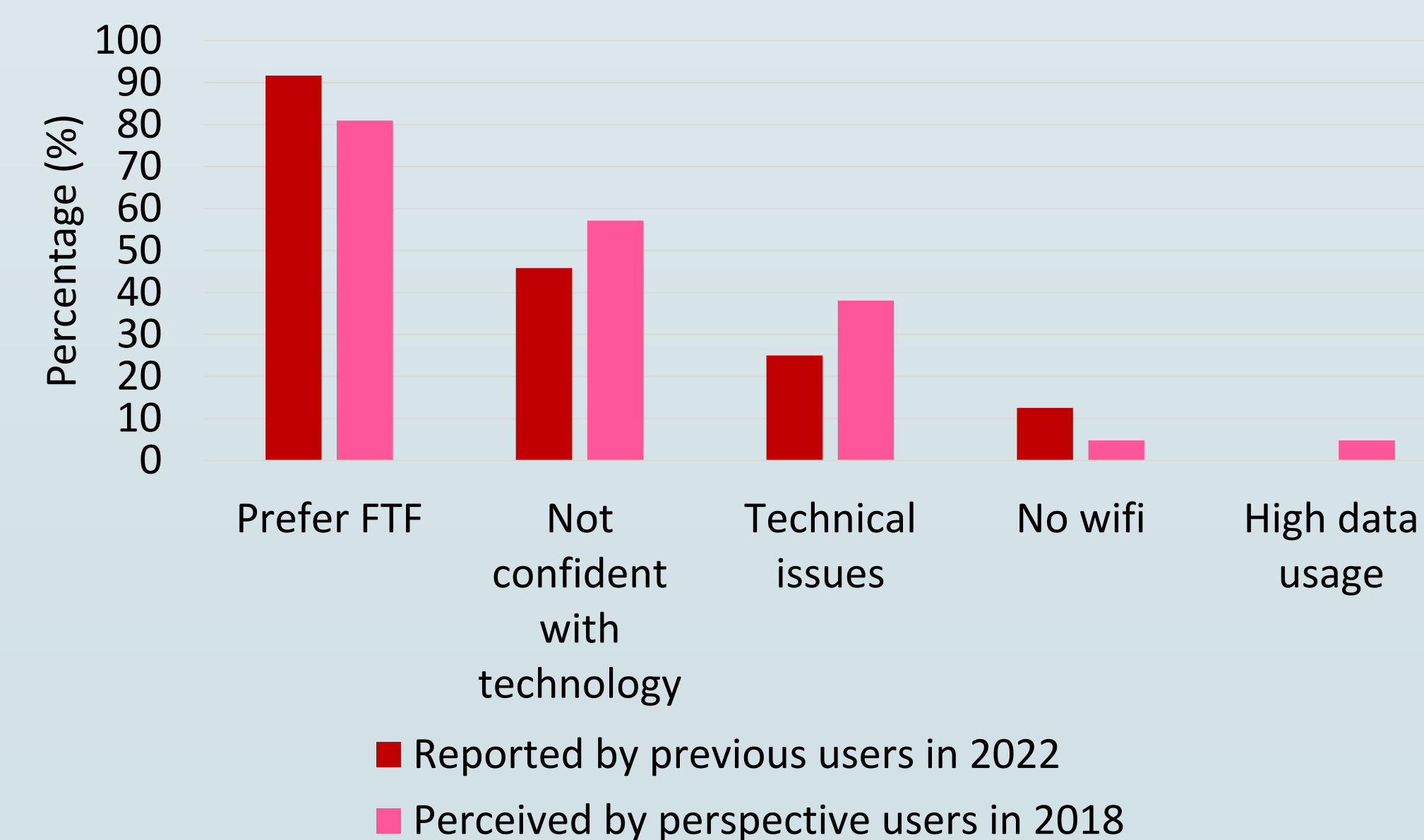
Willing to Continue Using NHS Near Me



Benefits for using NHS Near Me



Barriers to using NHS Near Me



Conclusion

We conclude that feedback from current users of the NHS Near me via Attend Anywhere in Dumfries and Galloway were generally positive.

Conversely, majority of previous users prefer face-to-face consultations, possibly due to perception of the traditional approach to consultations and fear on missing out on physical examination or additional tests. Patients who are less experienced in technology also found themselves having less confidence when using the service.

Additional planning with focus on simpler explanation or video demonstration prior to using the service is recommended for wider implementation within the renal services and the wider NHS.

References

<https://www.vc.scot.nhs.uk/near-me/guides/>



Scan for video user guide for NHS Near Me