Beating the postcode lottery – using telehealth to deliver renal nutrition services across MNHHS

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Introduction
• The Kidney Health Service has established clinics at 6 sites across MNHHS from inner city to fringe locations including Redcliffe and Caboolture to provide services close to where patients live.

• The traditional face to face outpatient model of care used in dietetics cannot be sustained in a service with multiple clinics in multiple locations, often running simultaneously across a large geographical area with a growing population.

• There is good evidence to support the delivery of dietetics services using telehealth as a mode of delivery.

Aim
To evaluate using telehealth as a potential mode of delivery to provide renal nutrition services across MNHHS.

Methods
• Using the Plan, Study, Do, Act model we conducted a user consultation for service adaptation, to inform service change.

• We did a telephone survey using a semiquantitative questionnaire.

• Existing and potential users of dietetics services were contacted.

Results
• 33/65 (51%) potential respondents agreed to participate, including 23 existing (70%) and 10/33 (30%) potential service users.

• Participants surveyed identified face to face as the most preferred mode of delivery (n=17, 51%), followed by telephone (n=14, 42%) and telehealth/videocall (n=2, 6%).

• 20/33 (60%) survey participants responded YES to trialling telehealth.

• Barriers to telehealth included no device with camera, limited internet access, no email address, lack of confidence or mistrust in using technology/telehealth, and difficulty understanding clinicians via technology.

Conclusion
• Significant barriers exist to using telehealth as a mode of delivery to provide renal nutrition services across MNHHS.

• Further exploration of these barriers is required to consider telehealth as a mode of delivery.

Patient quotes:
“"I’m not very tech savvy and the computer is always playing up”

“My hearing isn’t too good so I’d prefer to come to the clinic for my appointments”

“I prefer the old school way… I like to be in the same room when talking about my health”

“I’d be willing to give telehealth a go but I don’t have any internet at home”