



The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) Allied Health TeleBurns Service: An implementation evaluation using the RE-AIM approach

Amber Jones¹, Perry Judd¹, Dr Hannah Carter², Dr Clare Burns¹, Dr Angela Chang¹, Andrea Mc Kittrick¹, Anita Plaza¹, Dr Michelle Cottrell¹

¹Allied Health Professions, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Brisbane, Australia

²Australian Centre for Health Services Innovation, Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

BACKGROUND:

RBWH provides a state-wide specialist burns service to over 1,000 individuals every year, 81% of these patients reside outside the Metro North catchment. Historically, patients were required to travel to Brisbane to receive ongoing outpatient Allied Health care post burn injury, at a cost of \$400K annually to the Queensland Health Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. Many of these patients (35%) were discharged prematurely due to non-attendance at clinic appointments. Telehealth presented an opportunity to mitigate many of the challenges in accessing these services.

AIM:

To evaluate the implementation of the RBWH Allied Health TeleBurns Service as an alternative method of service delivery to prevent patients having to travel to access equivalent in-person allied health services.

METHODS:

A multi-methods approach, embedded within the RE-AIM framework, was undertaken for all patients referred to the service between April 2019 – December 2020 (LNR/2019/QRBW/52655).

RESULTS:

- 318 referrals to the service, 623 consults attended by 201 unique patients
- Most consults (72%) directly into the patients' home
- 40 Queensland Health facilities (across all 15 health service districts) involved in inter-facility appointments
- Delivery of the service cost an average of \$437 per appointment
- Estimated patient travel distance of 522,197km avoided
- Saving of \$147,097 in subsidised travel expenses and \$74,387 in estimated out of pocket expenses
- Overall average of \$1,101 in travel expenses avoided per patient
- No adverse events or clinical safety incidents
- Only 6.8% of all consults had major technical issues
- High levels of satisfaction were reported by both patients and clinicians (Table 1).

Table 1: Patients' perceptions towards accessing care via the TeleBurns Service

n = 153	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I had no problems hearing the telehealth clinician	0	2	6	33	112
I had no problems seeing the telehealth clinician	0	1	2	25	125
I felt comfortable speaking to the telehealth clinician	0	1	4	18	130
I was able to follow the telehealth clinician's instructions with ease	1	0	2	31	119
I felt the telehealth clinician listened and responded to my questions and/or concerns	0	1	1	20	131
I felt that the telehealth session met my needs	1	2	3	21	126
I would be happy to have another appointment via telehealth	2	0	3	19	129

CONCLUSION:

The RBWH Allied Health TeleBurns Service was successfully implemented as an alternative pathway for individuals with burn injuries to be able to access specialised care closer to home. Results may support the implementation of telehealth burns services in other jurisdictions.

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