Pre-Pandemic Phase: The State of Affairs

The Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney provides outpatient care for patients with early and advanced liver disease, hepatocellular carcinoma and after liver transplantation.

The clinic is now over 90% virtual through the uptake of telemedicine funded through Medicare.*

Allows the continuation of care for patients while minimising the risk of COVID-19 infection.

Communication via phone calls or video calls, prescriptions are faxed or sent electronically to the pharmacy and pathology slips are mailed to patients.

THE SOLUTION

Pandemic Phase: The Problem

Outpatient liver clinic attendances have been severely restricted since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting the opportunity for face-to-face consultations with patients.

Post-Pandemic: Future Perspectives

To optimise uptake of telemedicine, patient and physician barriers need to be further explored to help minimise telemedicine appointment no-shows.

Telemmedicine has the potential to be embedded as mainstream practice for the delivery of hepatology services, with strong links to other healthcare providers in the community. However, it is uncertain whether the government will continue to fund telemicine beyond September 2020.

Nursing oversight is critical to ensure all patients attend routine monitoring appointments and results are reviewed by medical staff.

Multi-stakeholder involvement:

- Clinical nurse consultants manage pathology
- General practitioners manage non-complex patients
- Local providers for pathology and imaging in lieu of hospital services
- Pharmacists pivoting to electronic scripts or faxed scripts

*Medicare is the publicly funded universal healthcare insurance scheme in Australia, operated by Services Australia. Medicare is the main source of payment of healthcare in Australia, either partially or fully covering the cost of most primary healthcare services for eligible citizens, residents and some visitors. Strasser S, personal communication. Integrated Symposium of The Digital International Liver Congress™ 2020. This meeting has been organised and funded by Gilead Sciences Europe Ltd. Date of preparation: August 2020. IHQ-LVD-2020-08-0025. © 2020 Gilead Sciences Europe Ltd.