IMPLEMENTING A TELEDENTISTRY WORKFLOW IN THE INTEGRATED SPECIAL CARE CLINIC (ISCC)

Chang Amy, Tervo Bryan*, Munz Stephanie*
Integrated Special Care Clinic, University of Michigan School of Dentistry

BACKGROUND

Background: The demand for virtual care increased during the pandemic and implementing telehealth in the field of dentistry has become a desired method for facilitating referrals, initial screenings, and diagnosing certain oral diseases. Teledentistry is especially useful in our patients with special health care needs (SHCNs).

Aim: The goal of this research project is to build and implement a workflow where teledentistry is able to be integrated into the University of Michigan's Integrated Special Care Clinic (ISCC) which allows for learners to practice these virtual skill sets.

Method: To do so, we created a concept map to serve as a tool that outlines the structure of a teledentistry appointment while providing links to resources to be used by the learner during their teledentistry encounters. To broaden the study team's understanding of the designed tool and the overall outcomes for learners of using teledentistry, we utilized focus groups and distributed anonymous Qualtrics surveys using a Likert Scale to dental students in their 3rd and 4th year (D3, D4) after their clinical rotations in the ISCC environment.

Results: Pooling both datasets of D3 and D4 students (n=192) show that about 90% of respondents either somewhat agree or strongly agree with the workflow tool's accuracy, teaching utility, and benefits to learners. Of the 90%, 60% in both D3 and D4 groups selected "strongly agree."

Conclusion: These results indicate a strong positive perception of the teledentistry workflow in the ISCC, both in terms of its accuracy in depicting actual practices and its utility as a teaching tool. The data suggests that the workflow is well-designed and effectively captures the teledentistry process in the clinic. Furthermore, teledentistry may be useful as a tool for dental offices to prepare for patient care and manage complex patient information, especially for patients who have special health care needs.
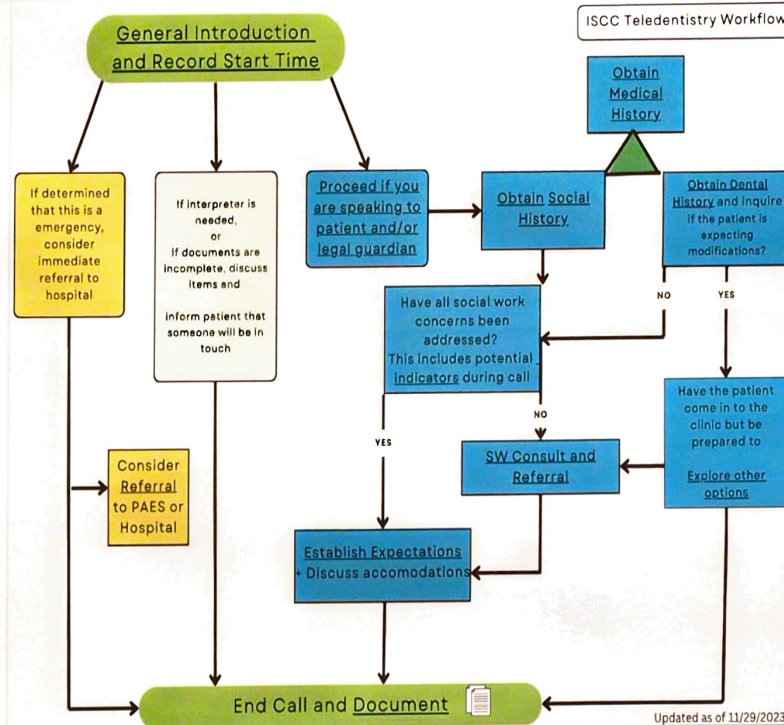
METHODS & RESULTS

Figure 1: ISCC Teledentistry Workflow

Updated as of 11/29/2023

Figure 2: D3 Sentiments on ISCC Workflow

Figure 3: D4 Sentiments on ISCC Workflow

DISCUSSION

- A total of 79 D3s and 113 D4s (response rate of 60% and 87%, respectively) responded since January 2024. Most students have been satisfied with the workflow and agree it is helpful for understanding teledentistry appointments.
- Overall, the D4 respondents indicate a documented workflow is seen as beneficial for teaching and conducting teledentistry in the ISCC, with 93.0% of students strongly agreeing or somewhat agreeing with its utility.
- Additionally, data show that 87% of D4s and 82% of D3s believe that teledentistry is an effective tool for preparing for patient care, learner education, and organizing complex patient care information in the ISCC.
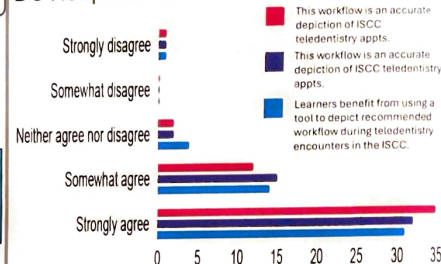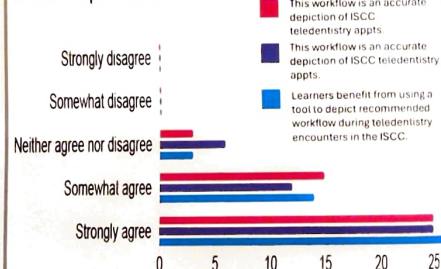
SUMMARY

- A teledentistry workflow provides guidance to students while conducting telehealth calls in the ISCC and considers a holistic and inclusive approach to personalized, collaborative care of the patients with SHCNs.
- Teledentistry is an effective tool to prepare for in-person appointments with patients with SHCNs and has potential applications beyond academic health settings.